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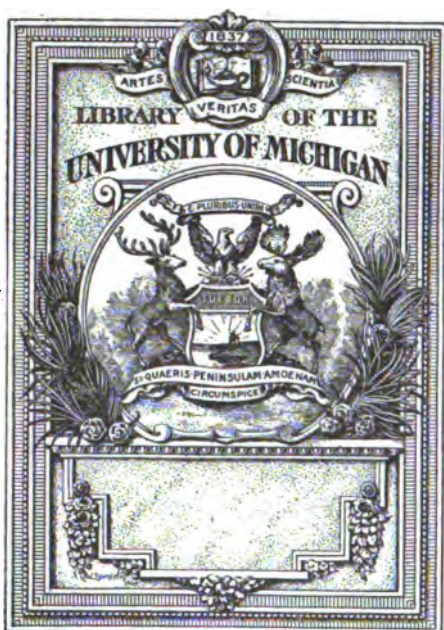
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"Laden with Golden Grain."

THE
37567
ARGOSY.

EDITED BY
MRS. HENRY WOOD.

VOLUME V.
December, 1867, to May, 1868.

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THE ARGOSY.

DECEMBER 1, 1867.

ANNE HEREFORD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE."

CHAPTER I.

MRS. EDWIN BARLEY.

AN express train was dashing along a line of rails in the heart of England. On one of the first-class carriages there had been a board, bearing the intimation "For Ladies Only," but the guard had taken it off when the train first started. It had come many miles since. Seated inside, the only passenger in that compartment, was a little girl in deep mourning. All was black about her, save the white frills of her drawers, which peeped below her short, black, flounced frock. A thoughtful, gentle child, with a smooth, pale forehead, earnest eyes, and long, dark eyelashes that swept her cheek. It was a gloomy September day, foggy, and threatening rain—a *sad*-looking day; and the child's face seemed to have borrowed the aspect of the weather, pervaded, as it was, by a tinge of sadness. That little girl was myself, Anne Hereford.

The train slackened speed, and glided into an important station, larger than any we had passed. It was striking one, and the guard came up to the carriage. "Now, my little lady," said he, "change lines here, and stop for ten minutes."

I liked that guard. He had a kind, hearty face, and he had come up several times to the carriage-door during the journey, asking how I got on. He told me he had a little girl of his own, about as old as I.

"Are you hungry?" he asked, as he lifted me from the carriage.

"Not very, thank you. I have eaten the biscuits."

"Halloa! Stern!" he called out, stopping a man who was hurrying past. "Are you going with the Nettleby train?"

"Yes. What if I am?" was the man's answer. He was rightly named Stern, for he had a stern, sour face.

"See this little girl. She is in the guard's charge. To be put in the ladies' carriage, and taken on to Nettleby."

The man gave a short nod by way of answer, and hurried away. And the guard took me into a large room, where crowds were pressing round a counter. "Here, Miss Williams," he said, to one of the young women behind it, "Give this little lady something to eat and drink, and take care of her till the Nettleby train starts. She's to have what comes to a shilling."

"What will you take, my dear?" asked Miss Williams.

The counter was so full of good things that I did not know what, but fixed at length upon a plum-tart. Miss Williams laughed, and said I had better eat some sandwiches first and the tart afterwards.

She was pouring me out a cup of coffee when the guard came up again. "Your baggage is changed, little lady," said he. "You'll find it all right at the Nettleby station. Good day."

"Good-bye, and thank you," I answered, holding out my hand, that he might shake it. I felt sorry to part with him—he seemed like a friend. Soon after, the surly guard put in his head and beckoned to me. He marshalled me to a carriage which had a similar board upon it to the other, "For Ladies Only," and shut me in without a word. Two ladies sat opposite to me. They did not speak either; but they stared a great deal. I thought it must be at the two tarts Miss Williams had given me in a paper bag, and did not like to eat them.

At the next station another lady got in, and she began talking at once.

"Are you travelling all alone, little girl?"

"Yes, ma'am. The guard takes care of me."

"Have you come far?"

I had come from a remote part of Devonshire, the sea-coast. It seemed a long way to me, and I said so.

"Will you tell me your name? I daresay it is a pretty one."

"It is Anne Hereford."

"Devonshire is a very nice part of the country. Have you lived in it all your life?"

"Not quite. I was born in India. Mamma brought me to England when I was three years old."

"You are in deep mourning. Is it for a near relative?"

I did not answer. I turned to look out at the window until the tears should go away again. I could not bear that strangers should see them. The lady asked again, and presently I turned round.

"For mamma."

She was silent for some time, looking at me. "Is your papa dead also?"

"He died a long while before mamma did."

"You say you were born in India: perhaps he was an officer?"

"He was Colonel Hereford."

"How many brothers and sisters have you?"

"Not any."

"Where are you going to live?"

"I don't know. I am going now to my Aunt Selina's."

The train approached a station and the lady got out, or she probably would have asked me a great deal more. At the station following that, the two silent ladies left, and I was alone again. The first thing I did was to eat my tarts and throw away the paper bag. After that I fell asleep, and remembered no more till the guard's surly voice woke me.

"This is Nettleby, if you are a-going to get out." He said something about some luggage. "How much is it?"

"A large box and a small one, and two carpet-bags. 'Miss Hereford, passenger to Nettleby,' is written on them. Can you please to tell me whether it is far to Mr. Edwin Barley's?"

"I don't know any Mr. Edwin Barley. Jem," added he, to one of the porters, "see after her. I'm going to hand out her things."

"Where do you want to go, miss?" the porter asked.

"To Mr. Edwin Barley's. They told me I must get out at the Nettleby station, and ask to be sent on, unless a carriage met me here."

"You must mean Mr. Edwin Barley, of Hallam."

"Yes, that's it. Is it far?"

"Well, Hallam's five miles off, and the house is a mile on this side of it. There's no rail, miss; you must go by the omnibus."

"But are you sure that Mrs. Edwin Barley has not come to meet me?" I asked, feeling a sort of chill.

Not any one had come, and the porter put me into the omnibus with some more passengers. What a long drive it seemed! And the hedges and trees looked very dreary, for the shades of evening were gathering.

At the foot of a hill the omnibus pulled up, and a man who had sat by the driver came round. "Ain't there somebody inside for Mr. Edwin Barley's?"

"Yes; I am."

I got out, and the luggage was put upon the ground. "Two shillings, miss."

"Two shillings!" I repeated, in an accent of alarm.

"Why, did you expect to come for one—and inside too! It's uncommon cheap, is this omnibus."

"Oh, it is not that. But I have not any money."

"Not got any money!"

"They did not give me any. They gave the guard my fare to Nettleby. Mr. Sterling said I should be sure to be met."

The man went up to the driver. "I say, Bill, this child says she's got no money."

The driver turned round and looked at me. "We can call to-morrow for it; I dare say it's all right. Do you belong to the Barleys, miss?"

"Mrs. Edwin Barley is my aunt. I am come on a visit to her."

"Oh, it's all right. Get up, Joe."

"But please," said I, stopping the man, in an agony of fear—for I could see no house, nor sign of one, save a small, round, low building that might contain one room—"which *is* Mr. Edwin Barley's? Am I to stay in the road with the boxes?"

The man laughed, said he had supposed I knew, and began shouting out.

"Here, missis! You see that big green gate, miss?" he added to me. "Well, that leads up to Mr. Barley's, and that's his lodge."

A woman came out of the lodge, in answer to the shout, and opened the gate. The man explained, put the trunks inside the gate, and the omnibus drove on.

"I beg pardon that I can't go up to the house with you, miss, but it's not far, and you can't miss it," said she. "I have got my baby sick in its cradle, and dare not leave it alone. You are little Miss Hereford?"

"Yes."

"It's odd they never sent to meet you at Nettleby, if they knew you were coming! But they have visitors at the house, and perhaps young madam forgot it. Straight on, miss, and you'll soon come to the hall door; go up the steps, and give a good pull at the bell."

There was no help for it: I had to go up the gloomy avenue alone. It was a broad gravel drive, wide enough for two carriages to pass each other; a thick grove of trees on either side. The road wound round, and I had just got in sight of the house when I was startled considerably by what proved to be a man's head projecting beyond the trees. He appeared to be gazing steadfastly at the house, but turned his face suddenly at my approach. But for that, I might not have observed him. The face looked dark, ugly, menacing; and I started with a spring to the other side of the way.

I did not speak to him, or he to me, but my heart beat with fear, and I was glad enough to see lights from several of the windows in front of me. I thought it a very large house: I found afterwards that it contained eighteen rooms, and some of them small; but then we had lived in a pretty cottage of six. There was no need to ring. At the open door stood a man and a maid-servant, laughing and talking.

"Who are you?" cried the girl.

"I want Mrs. Edwin Barley."

"Then I think want must be your master," she returned. "It is somebody from Hallam, I suppose. Mrs. Edwin Barley cannot possibly see you to-night."

"You just go away, little girl," added the footman. "You must come to-morrow morning, if you want anything."

Their manner was so authoritative that I felt frightened, nearly crying as I stood. What if they should really turn me away!

"Why don't you go?" asked the girl, sharply.

"I have nowhere to go to. My boxes are down at the gate."

"Why, who are you?" she inquired, in a quick tone.

"I am Miss Hereford."

"Heart alive!" she whispered to the man. "I beg your pardon, miss. I'll call Charlotte Delves."

"What's that? Who will you call?" broke from an angry voice at the back of the hall. "Call 'Charlotte Delves,' will you? Go in to your work this instant, you insolent girl. Do you hear me, *Jemima*?"

"I didn't know you were there, *Miss Delves*," was the half-saucy, half-deprecating answer. "The young lady has come—*Miss Hereford*."

A tall, slight, good-looking woman of thirty-five or thirty-six came forward. I could not tell whether she was a lady or a maid. She wore a small, stylish cap, and a handsome muslin gown with flounces—which were in fashion then. Her eyes were light; long, dark curls fell on either side her face, and her address was good.

"How do you do, *Miss Hereford*?" she said, taking my hand. "Come in, my dear. We did not expect you until next week. *Mrs. Barley* is in the drawing-room."

"*Mrs. Barley* is in her chamber, dressing for dinner," contended *Jemima*, from the back of the hall, as if intent on aggravation.

Miss Delves made no reply. She ran upstairs, and opened a door, from whence came a warm glow of fire-light. "Wait there a moment," she said, looking round at me. "*Mrs. Edwin Barley*, the child has come."

"What child?" returned a voice—a young, gay, sweet voice.

"*Little Miss Hereford*."

"My goodness! Come to-day! And I with no mourning about me, to speak of. Well, let her come in."

I knew my Aunt *Selina* again in a moment. She had stayed with us in Devonshire for three months, two years before, when she was nineteen. The same lovely face, with its laughing blue eyes, and its shining golden hair. She wore an embroidered clear-muslin white dress, with low body and sleeves, and a few black ribbons; jet bracelets, and a long jet chain.

"You darling child! But what made you come in this strange way, without notice?"

"*Mr. Sterling* said he wrote word to you, *Selina*, that I should be here on Thursday. You ought to have had the letter yesterday."

"Well, so he did write; but I thought—how stupid I must have been!" she interrupted, with a sudden laugh. "I declare I took it to mean next Thursday. But you are all the more welcome, dear. You have grown prettier, *Anne*, with those deep eyes of yours."

I stood before her very gravely. I had *dreaded* the meeting, believing it would be one of sobs and lamentation for my mother. I had not

taken into account how careless and light-headed Selina was. I had called her "Selina" since, a little girl of four, I had gone on a visit to Keppe Carew.

Taking off my bonnet, she kissed me several times, and then held me before her by my hands as she sat on the sofa. Miss Delves had gone out and closed the door.

"They are not home from shooting yet, Anne, so we can have a little talk to ourselves. When they go to the far covers, there's no knowing when they'll be in: two nights ago they kept me waiting dinner until eight o'clock."

"Who did, Aunt Selina?"

"Mr. Barley, and the rest," she answered, carelessly. "Anne, how very strange it was that your mamma should have died so quickly at the last! It was only two weeks before her death that she wrote to tell me she was ill."

"She had been ill longer than that, Aunt Selina——"

"Call me Selina, child."

"But she did not tell any one until she knew there was danger. She did not tell me."

"It was a renewal of that old complaint she had in India—that inward complaint."

I turned my head and my wet eyes from her. "They told me it was her heart, Selina."

"Yes; in a measure, that had something to do with it. It must have been a sad parting, Anne. Why, child, you are sobbing!"

"Please don't talk of it!"

"But I must talk of it: I like to have my curiosity gratified," she said, in her quick way. "Did the doctors say from the first that there was no hope?"

"Mamma knew there was no hope when she wrote to you. She had told me so the day before."

"I wonder she told you at all."

"Oh, Selina! that fortnight was too short for the leave-taking; for all she had to say to me. It will be years, perhaps, before we meet again."

"Meet again! Meet where?"

"In Heaven!"

"You are a strange child!" exclaimed Selina, looking at me very steadfastly. "Ursula has infected you, I see, with her serious notions. I used to tell her there was time enough for it years hence."

"And mamma used to tell you that, perhaps if you put off and put off, the years hence might never come for you, Selina."

"What! you remember that, do you?" she said, with a smile. "Yes, she used to lecture me; she was fifteen years older than I, and assumed the right to do so."



"SHE HELD ME BEFORE HER."

1. 1116

"Mamma never *lectured*; what she said was always kind and gentle," was my sobbing answer.

"Yes, yes. You think me insensible now, Anne; but my grief is over—that is, the violence of the grief. When the letter came to say Ursula was dead, I cried the whole day, never ceasing."

"Mamma had a warning of her death," I continued; for it was one of the things she had charged me to tell to her sister Selina.

"Had a what, child?"

"A warning. The night before she was taken ill—I mean dangerously ill—she dreamt she saw papa in a most beautiful place, all light and flowers; no place on earth could ever have been so beautiful, except the Garden of Eden. He beckoned her to come to him, and pointed to a vacant place by his side, saying, 'It is ready for you now, Ursula.' Mamma awoke then, and the words were sounding in her ears; she could have felt sure that they were positively spoken."

"And you can tell me this with a grave face, calling it a warning!" exclaimed Selina.

"Mamma charged me to tell it you. She related the dream to us the next morning——"

"*Us*! Whom do you mean, child?"

"Me and our old maid Betty. She was my nurse, you know. Mamma said what a pleasant dream it was, that she was sorry to awake from it; but after she grew ill, she said she knew it was sent as a warning."

Selina laughed. "You have lived boxed up with that stupid old Betty and your mamma, child, until you are like a grave little woman. Ursula was always superstitious. You will say you believe in ghosts next."

"No, I do not believe in ghosts. I do in warnings. Mamma said that never a Keppe Carew died yet without being warned of it: though few of them had noticed it at the time."

"There, that will do, Anne. I am a Carew, and I don't want to be frightened into watching for a 'warning.' You are a Carew—also, by the mother's side. Do you know, my poor child, that you are not left well off?"

"Yes; mamma has told me all. I don't mind."

"Don't mind!" echoed Selina, with another light laugh. "That's because you don't understand, Anne. What little your mamma had left has been sunk in an annuity for your education—eighty or a hundred pounds a-year, until you are eighteen. There's something more, I believe, for clothes and incidental expenses."

"I said I did not mind, Selina, because I am not afraid of getting my own living. Mamma said that a young lady, well-educated and of good birth, can always command a desirable position as governess. She told me not to fear, for God would take care of me."

"Some money might be desirable for all that," returned my aunt, in a tone that sounded full of irreverence to my unaccustomed ears. "The

maddest step Colonel Hereford ever took was that of selling out. He thought to better himself, and he spent and lost the money, leaving your mamma with very little when he died."

"I don't think mamma cared much for money, Selina."

"I don't think she did, or she would not have taken matters so quietly. Do you remember, Anne, how she used to go on at me when I said I should marry Edwin Barley?"

"Yes; mamma said how very wrong it would be of you to marry for money."

"Quite true. She used to put her hands to her ears when I said I hated him. Now, what are those earnest eyes of yours searching me for?"

"Do you hate him, Selina!"

"I am not dying of love for him, you strange child."

"One day a poor boy had a monkey before the window, and you said Mr. Edwin Barley was as ugly as that. Is he ugly?"

Selina burst into a peal of ringing laughter. "Oh, he is very handsome, Anne; as handsome as the day: when you see him you shall tell me if you don't think so. I——. What is the matter? What are you looking at?"

As I stood before my aunt, the door behind her seemed to be pushed gently open. I had thought some one was coming in; and said so.

"The fire-light must have deceived you, Anne. That door is kept bolted; it leads to a passage communicating with my bed-room, but we do not use it."

"I am certain that I saw it open," was my answer; and an unpleasant, fanciful thought came over me that it might be the man I saw in the avenue. "It is shut now; it shut again when I spoke."

She rose, walked to the door, and tried to open it, but it was fast.

"You see, Anne. Don't you get fanciful, my dear; that is what your mamma was," and I shook my head in answer.

"Selina, did not Mr. Edwin Barley want me to go to Mrs. Hemson's, instead of coming here?"

"Who told you that?"

"I heard Mr. Sterling talking of it with mamma."

"Mr. Edwin Barley did, little woman. Did you hear why he wished it?"

"No."

"You should have heard that, it was so flattering to me. He thought I was too giddy to take charge of a young lady."

"Did he?"

"But Ursula would not accept the objection. It could not matter for a few weeks, she wrote to Mr. Edwin Barley, whether I were giddy or serious, and she could not think of consigning you, even temporarily, to Mrs. Hemson. Ah! my cousin Frances Carew and I took exactly

opposite courses, Anne : I married for money, she for love. She met an attractive stranger at a watering-place, and married him."

"And it was not right?"

"It was all wrong. He was a tradesman. A good-looking, educated man ; I grant that ; but a tradesman. Never was such a thing heard of, as for a Carew to stoop to that. You see, Anne, she had learnt to like him before she knew anything of his position, or who he was. He was a visitor at the place, just as she was. Of course she ought to have given him up. Not she ; she gave herself and her money to him, and a very pretty little fortune she had."

"Did she marry in disobedience?"

"That cannot be charged upon her, for she was alone in the world, and her own mistress. But a Carew of Keppe Carew ought to have known better."

"She was not of Keppe Carew, Selina."

"She was. Don't you know that, Anne? Her father was Carew of Keppe Carew ; and when he died without a son, his brother, your mamma's father and mine, became Carew of Keppe Carew. He died in his turn, leaving no son, and Keppe Carew and its broad lands went to a distant man, the male heir. We three Carews have all married badly, in one way or another."

Mrs. Edwin Barley was speaking dreamily then, as if forgetting anybody heard her.

"She, Frances, married Hemson the tradesman, throwing a barrier between herself and her family ; Ursula married Colonel Hereford, to wear out a few of her best years in India, and then to die in poverty, and leave an unprovided-for child ; and I have married him, Edwin Barley. Which is the worst, I wonder?"

I thought over what she said in my busy brain. Few children had so active a one.

"Selina, you say you married Mr. Edwin Barley because he is rich."

"Well."

"Why did you, when you were rich yourself?"

"I rich? You will count riches differently when you are older. Why, Anne, do you know what my fortune was? Four thousand pounds. Ursula had the same, and she and Colonel Hereford spent it. That put a notion in my father's head, and he tied mine up tight enough, securing it to my absolute use until I die."

"Will it be Mr. Barley's when you die, Selina?"

"Were I to die before next Monday, it would be yours, pussy, for it is so settled. After that, if I die without a will, it would go to Mr. Edwin Barley ; but I shall be of age next Monday, and then can make one. I think it must be my first care—a will ;" she laughed. "So munificent a sum to dispose of ! Shall I leave it to you ?"

The room-door was pushed open, and some one entered. A shortish

man, of nearly forty years, in a velveteen shooting-coat and gaiters, and with a dark face : the same dark face that looked out from the trees in the avenue. I shrank round Selina with a sudden fear. Not that the features were particularly ill-favoured in themselves, but so dark and stern. And the remembrance of the fright was on me still.

"Where are you coming to, child?" she said. "This is Mr. Edwin Barley."

CHAPTER II.

IN THE WOOD.

THAT Mr. Edwin Barley! My imagination had been setting him down for a robber at least; and the thought flashed over me—How could Selina have married him? Another thought came with it—Had he been the intruder at the door?

"Who is that, Selina?" he asked, in a very strong, determined voice, but not an unpleasing one.

"Anne Hereford. Fancy my making so stupid a mistake as to conclude it was next Thursday the lawyer meant. And she has had to find her way from Nettleby, in the best way she could."

He looked at me with his black eyes, the blackest eyes I had ever seen. Either they wore a warning expression, or I fancied so, and I took it to mean I was not to say I saw him watching the house from the avenue. No fear, after that, that I should speak of it.

"Did you walk from Nettleby, little one?"

"No, sir. I came in the omnibus to the gate."

"She has been asking me if you were very handsome; and I told her to wait and see," observed Selina, with a laugh, and somehow it grated on my ears. He made no reply in words, but his brow contracted a little.

"How is it you are home before the others?" she resumed. "And where are they lingering? Charlotte Delves says the dinner is spoiling."

"They cannot be far behind," was Mr. Edwin Barley's answer. "I'll go and dress."

As he went out of the room we heard sounds of voices and laughter. Selina opened the window, and I stood by her. The night had grown clearer, the moon was bright. Three gentlemen, dressed something like Mr. Edwin Barley, were approaching the house with game, guns, and dogs.

"Can you see them by this light, Anne?"

"I can see that two are young, and one looks old. He has gray hair."

"Not very old, not more than fifty—but he is so stout. It is the parson, Mr. Martin."

"Do parsons go out shooting, Selina?"

"Only when they can get the chance," she laughed. "That young one is Philip King, a ward of Mr. Edwin Barley's. He and I are not friends at all, and I do what I can to vex him. He is terribly ill-tempered."

"Is he!"

"He fell in love with me at Easter, the silly boy! Fancy that! One can't think it was in earnest, you know, but it really seemed like it. I asked him if he would like his ears boxed, and Mr. Edwin Barley gave us both a sharp talking-to, saying we ought to be sent to school again."

"Both! But if it was not your fault?"

"Mr. Edwin Barley said it was my fault," she returned, with a laugh. "Perhaps it was. He has not, as I believe, liked Philip King since."

"Who is the other one with them, Selina?" I asked, as the gentlemen below disappeared.

"The other is George Heneage—a great friend of mine. Hush! he is coming up."

George Heneage entered. A young man, tall, slender, active; with a pale, pleasant face, and dark wavy hair. He had a merry smile, and I thought I had never seen any one so nice-looking. Mrs. Edwin Barley moved to the fire, and he took her hand in greeting.

"Well! And how have you been all day? Dull?"

It was the pleasantest voice! Quite a contrast after that of Mr. Barley.

"Much any of you care whether I am dull or gay," she returned in answer, half laughing, half pouting. "The partridges get all your time, just now. I might be dead and buried before any of you came home to see after me."

"We must shoot, you know, Selina. One of us, at any rate, came home a couple of hours ago—Barley."

"Not to me. He has but just come in. You must be mistaken."

"Look here. I was away for a short while from the party, seeing after the horse I lamed the other day, and when I got back, Barley had vanished: they thought he had gone to look after me. Perhaps he had in one sense, the great simpleton—Hullo! who's that?" He broke off, seeing me for the first time, as I stood partly within the shade of the window-curtain.

"It is little Anne Hereford. She has come a week before I expected her. Anne, come forward, and let Mr. Heneage make love to you. It is a pastime he favours."

He lifted me up by the waist, looked at me, and put me down again.

"A pretty little face to make love to. How old are you?"

"Eleven, sir."

"Eleven!" he echoed, in surprise. "I should have taken you for nine at the very most. Eleven!"

"And eleventeen in sober sense," interposed Selina, in her lightest and most careless manner. "I suppose children are so who never live with brothers and sisters. You should hear her talk, George! I tell her, her mamma and nurse have made an old woman of her."

"Dare I venture to your presence in this trim, Mrs. Edwin Barley?"

The speaker was the Rev. Mr. Martin, who came slowly in, pointing to his attire. "It is Barley's fault, and you must blame him, not me," he continued. "Barley invited me to say grace at your table to-day, and then disappeared, keeping us waiting for him until now, and giving me no time to go home and make myself presentable."

"Never mind, Mr. Martin, there are worse misfortunes at sea," she said, in that charmingly attractive manner that she could sometimes use. "I have sat down with gentlemen in shooting-coats before to-day, and enjoyed my dinner none the worse for it. Is that you, Miss Delves?"

Footsteps were passing the open door, and Miss Delves came in. "Did you speak, Mrs. Edwin Barley?"

"Yes. Take this child, please: she must have some tea. Anne, dear, ask for anything to eat that you best fancy. You shall come up again after dinner."

We went to a small parlour on the ground floor—Miss Delves said it was her own sitting-room—and rang the bell. The maid who had been gossiping at the front door came in to answer it.

"Are you at tea yet, Jemima?"

"Yes, Miss Delves."

"I thought so. There's no regularity unless I am about everywhere myself. Bring in a cup for Miss Hereford, and some bread and butter."

They both left the room. I supposed that Miss Delves was going to dine presently, for a cloth was spread over one end of the table, with a knife and fork, the cruet-stand and salt-cellar, glasses, and a decanter of wine. Presently, Jemima came back with a small tray, that had my tea upon it. She seemed a free-and-easy sort of girl, sat down in a chair, and began chattering. Another servant came in with a small jar of preserves.

"Miss Delves has sent some jam for the young lady, if she'd like it. Or will she take a slice of cold meat first, she says?"

"I'll have the jam, please."

"That's right, miss," laughed Jemima. "Sweets is good."

"Arn't you coming to your tea, Jemima? There'll be a fuss if she comes in and finds you have not begun it."

"Bother the tea! We are not obliged to swallow it down just at the minute she pleases," was the answer of Jemima.

"I say," exclaimed the other, suddenly, "what do you think I saw? Young King——"

Jemima gave her a warning shake of the head, and pointed to me. The conversation was dropped to a whisper, in which I once caught the

words, "that handsome George Heneage." Presently steps were heard approaching, and the two maids disturbed themselves. Sarah caught up the plate of bread and butter, and stood as if she were handing it to me, and *Jemima* stirred the fire vigorously. It had been warm in the day, but the bit of lighted fire in the grate looked pleasant in the autumn evening. The footsteps passed on.

"How stupid you are! startling one for nothing!" exclaimed *Jemima*.

"I thought it was *Charlotte Delves*. It sounded just like her foot."

"She's in the kitchen, and won't come out of it till the dinner's gone in. She's in one of her tempers to-day."

"Is *Charlotte Delves* the mistress?" I could not help asking.

Both the maids burst out laughing. "She would like to be, miss; and she is, too, in many things," answered *Jemima*. "When young madam came home first——"

"Hush, *Jemima*! she may go and repeat it again."

Jemima looked at me. "No: she does not look like it. You won't go and repeat in the drawing-room the nonsense we foolish servants talk, will you, Miss *Hereford*?"

"Of course I will not. Mamma taught me never to carry tales; she said it made mischief."

"And so it does, miss," cried *Jemima*. "Your mamma was a nice lady, I'm sure! Was she not Mrs. *Edwin Barley's* sister?"

Before I had time to answer, *Charlotte Delves* came in. We had not heard her, and I thought she must have crept up on tiptoe. Sarah made her escape. *Jemima* took up the jam-pot.

"What are you waiting for?" she demanded, with asperity.

"I came in to see if the young lady wanted anything, ma'am."

"When Miss *Hereford* wants anything, she will ring."

Jemima retired. I went on with my tea, and Miss *Delves* began asking me questions about home and mamma. We were interrupted by a footman. He was bringing the fish out of the dining-room, and he laid the dish, with the fish-sauce, down on the table. Miss *Delves* turned her chair towards it, and began her dinner. I found that this was her usual manner of dining, but I thought it a curious one. The dishes, as they came out of the dining-room, were placed before her, and she helped herself. Her other meals she took when she pleased, *Jemima* generally waiting upon her. I did wonder who she could be.

It seemed that I had to sit there a long while. I was then taken upstairs by *Jemima*, and my hair brushed. It hung down in curls all round, and *Jemima* pleased me by saying it was the loveliest brown hair she ever saw. Then I was marshalled to the drawing-room. *Jemima* opened the door quietly, and I went in, seen, I believe, by nobody. It was a large room, of a three-cornered shape, quite full of bright furniture. *Selina's* grand piano was in the angle.

Standing before the fire, talking, were the clergyman and Mr. Edwin Barley. A stranger might have taken the one for the other, for the clergyman was in his sporting clothes, and Mr. Barley was all in black, with a white neckcloth. On a distant sofa, apparently reading a newspaper, sat Philip King; his features were handsome, but they had a very cross, disagreeable expression. He held the newspaper nearly level with his face, and I saw that his eyes, instead of being on it, were watching the movements of Mrs. Edwin Barley. She was at the piano, not so much singing or playing, as trying scraps of songs and pieces; Mr. Heneage standing by and talking to her. I went quietly round by the chairs at the back, and sat down on the low footstool at the corner of the hearth. The clergyman saw me and smiled: Mr. Barley did not; he stood with his back to me. He also seemed to be watching the piano, or those at it, as he spoke in a low, confidential tone with the clergyman.

"I disagree with you entirely, Barley," Mr. Martin was saying. "Rely upon it, he will be all the better and happier for following a profession. Why! at Easter he had made up his mind to read for the Bar!"

"Young men are changeable as the wind, especially those whom fortune has placed at ease in the world," replied Mr. Barley. "Philip was red-hot for the Bar at Easter, as you observe; but something appears to have set him against it now."

"You, as his guardian and trustee, should urge him to take it up; or, if not that, something else. A life of idleness plays the very ruin with some natures; and it strikes me that Philip King has no great resources within him to counteract the mischief of non-occupation. What is the amount of his property?" resumed Mr. Martin, after a pause.

"About eighteen hundred pounds a year the estate brings in."

"Nonsense! I thought it was only ten or twelve."

"Eighteen, full. Reginald's was a long minority, you know."

"Well, if it brought in eight-and-twenty, I should still say give him a profession. Let him have some legitimate work; occupy his hands and his head, and they won't get into mischief. That's sound advice, mind, Barley."

"Quite sound," rejoined Mr. Barley; but there was a tone in his voice throughout, that to me seemed to tell either of want of sincerity or else of a knowledge that to urge a profession on Philip King would be wrong and useless. At this period of my life people used to reproach me with taking up prejudices, likes and dislikes; as I grew older, I knew that God had gifted me in an eminent degree with the faculty of reading human countenances and human tones.

"I have no power to force a profession upon him," resumed Mr. Barley; "and I should not exercise it if I had. Shall I tell you why?" "Well."

"I don't think his lungs are sound. In my opinion, he is likely to go off as his brother did."

"Of consumption!" hastily uttered the clergyman: and Mr. Barley nodded.

"Therefore, why urge him to fag at acquiring a profession that he may not live to exercise?" continued Mr. Barley. "He looks anything but well; he is nothing like as robust as he was at Easter."

Mr. Martin turned his head and attentively scanned the face of Philip King. "I don't see anything the matter with him, Barley; except that he looks uncommonly cross. I hope you are mistaken."

"I hope I am. I saw a whole row of medicine phials in his room yesterday: when I inquired, he told me they contained steel medicine—tonics—the physician at Oxford had ordered them. Did you ever notice him at dinner—what he eats?"

"Not particularly."

"Do so, then, on the next opportunity. He takes scarcely anything. The commencement of Reginald's malady was loss of appetite: the doctors prescribed tonics for him. But they did not succeed in saving him.

Once more Mr. Martin turned his eyes on Philip King. "How old was Reginald King when he died?"

"Twenty-three. Three years older than Philip is now."

"Well, poor fellow, I hope he will outlive his weakness, whatever may cause it, and get strong again. That money of his would be a nice windfall for somebody to drop into," added the clergyman, after a pause. "Who is heir-at-law?"

"I am."

"You!"

"Of course I am," was the quiet reply of Mr. Edwin Barley.

"Nurse him up, nurse him up, then," said the clergyman, jokingly. "Lest, if anything did happen, the world should say you had not done your best to prevent it; for you know you are a dear lover of money, Barley."

There may have been a great deal more said, but I did not hear it. My head had sought the wall for its resting-place, and sleep stole over me.

What I felt most glad of, the next morning, was to get my purse. There were twenty-seven shillings in it; and old Betty had caused it to be put in one of the boxes, vexing me. "People in the train might rob me of it," she said.

Jemima waited on me at dressing, and I had breakfast in Miss Delves's parlour. Afterwards I went up to Mrs. Edwin Barley, in the drawing-room. She was in mourning, deep as mine.

"I had been tempted to put it off for a cool dress yesterday evening," she said to me. "What with the dinner, and the fire they *will* have, though I am sure it is not weather for it, I feel melted in black. The fire is kept large to please Philip King. So Miss Delves informed me

when I remonstrated against it the other day. He must be of a chilly nature."

Remembering what I had heard said the previous night, I thought he might be. But the words had afforded the opportunity for a question that I was longing, in my curiosity, to put.

"Selina, who is Miss Delves? Is she a lady or a servant?"

"You had better not call her a servant, Anne; she would never forgive it," answered Selina, with a short laugh. "She is a relative of Mr. Edwin Barley's."

"Then, why does she not sit with you, and dine at table?"

"Because I do not choose that she shall sit with me, and dine at table," was the resentful, haughty retort; and I could see that there had been some past unpleasantness in regard to Miss Delves. "When Mr. Edwin Barley's mother died, who used to live with him, Charlotte Delves came here as mistress of the house. That was all very well so long as there was no legitimate mistress, but ages went on, and I came to it. She assumed a great deal; I found she was planted down to table with us, and made herself my companion in the drawing-room at will. I did not like it; and one day I told my husband so in her presence. I said that I must be the sole mistress in my own house, and quitted the room, leaving them to settle it. Since then she has taken the parlour for her sitting-room, and looks to the household, as she did before. In short, Miss Delves is housekeeper. I have no objection to that; it saves me trouble, and I know nothing of domestic management. Now and then I invite her to take tea with us, or to a drive in the pony carriage, and we are vastly polite to each other always."

"But, if you do not like her——"

"Like her!" interrupted Selina. "My dear child, we hate each other like poison. It was not in human nature, you know, for her not to feel my entrance to the house as a *wrong*, displacing her from her high post, and from the influence she had contrived to acquire over Mr. Edwin Barley. They were as intimate as brother and sister; and I believe he is the only living being she cares for in the whole world. When I took the high tone with her, it exasperated her all the more against me, there's no doubt of it; and she repays it by carrying petty tales of me to Mr. Edwin Barley."

"And whose part did he take, Selina?"

"MINE, of course—always!" she returned, with a forcible emphasis on the first word. "But it has never been open warfare between me and Miss Delves, Anne; you must understand that. Should anything of the sort supervene, she would have to quit the house. A bitter pill that would be, for she has no money, and would have to go out as housekeeper in reality, or something of the kind. My occupation would be gone then."

"What occupation?"

"The saying and doing all sorts of wild things to make her think ill of me. She goes and whispers them to Mr. Edwin Barley. He listens to her—I know he does, and that provokes me. Well, little pet, what are those honest brown eyes of yours longing to say?"

"Why did you marry him, Selina?"

"People say for money, Anne. I say it was fate."

"He persuaded you, perhaps?"

"He did. Persuaded, pressed, worried me. He was two years talking me into it. Better, perhaps, that he had given his great love elsewhere? Better for him, possibly, that he had married Charlotte Delves!"

"But did he want to marry Charlotte Delves?"

"Never. I don't believe that even the thought ever entered his head. The servants say she used to hope it; but they rattle nonsense at random. Edwin Barley never cared but for two things in the world: myself and money."

"Money?"

"Money, Anne. Pretty little pieces of gold and silver; new, crisp bank-notes; yellow old deeds of parchment, representing houses and lands. He cares for money almost as much as for me; and he'll care for it more than for me in time. Who's this?"

It was Philip King. He came in, looking more cross, if possible, than he did the previous night. His face shone out sickly, too, in the bright morning sun. Selina spoke, but did not offer her hand.

"Good morning, Mr. King; I hope you feel better to-day. You did not get down to breakfast, I understand. Neither did I."

"I did get down to breakfast," he answered, speaking as if something had very much put him out. "I took it with Mr. Edwin Barley, in his study."

"Leaving George Heneage to breakfast alone. You two polite men! Had I known that, I would have come down and breakfasted with him."

That she said this in a spirit of mischief, in a manner most especially calculated to provoke him, I saw by the saucy look that shot from her dark blue eyes.

"I think you and Heneage breakfast together quite often enough as it is, Mrs. Edwin Barley."

"You do? Then, if I were you, sir, I would have the good manners to keep such thoughts to myself: or tell them to Mr. Edwin Barley, if you like. He might offer you a premium for them—who knows?"

Philip King was getting into an angry heat.

"I hope you have tolerably strong shoulders," she resumed, as if struck with some sudden thought.

"Why so?"

"George Heneage intends to try his cane upon them on the next convenient day."

His lips turned white. "Mrs. Barley, what do you mean?"

"Just what I say. You have taken to peep and pry after me—whether set on by any one, or from some worthy motive of your own, you best know. It will not serve you, Philip King. If there be one thing more detestable than another, it is that of spying. I happened to mention this new pastime of yours before Mr. Heneage, and he observed that he had a cane somewhere. That's all."

The intense aggravation with which she said it was enough to rouse the ire of one less excitable than Philip King. He was breaking out in abuse of Mr. Heneage, when the latter happened to come in. A few menacing words, a dark look or two from either side, and then came the quarrel.

A quarrel that terrified me. I ran out of the room; I ran back again; I don't know what I did. Mrs. Edwin Barley seemed nearly as excited as they were: it was not the first time I had seen her in a passion. She called out (taking the words from the old ballad, "Lord Thomas,") that she cared more for the little finger of George Heneage than for the whole body of ill-conditioned Philip King. I knew it was only one of her wild sayings: when in a passion she did not mind what she said, or whom she offended. I knew that this present quarrel was altogether Selina's fault—that her love of provocation had brought it on. Mr. Edwin Barley had gone over to his brother's; and it was well, perhaps, that it was so.

Jemima appeared on the stairs, carrying up a pail—there was no back staircase to the house. "What is the matter, Miss Hereford?" she asked. "Goodness me! how you are trembling!"

"They are quarrelling in there—Mr. Heneage and Mr. King. I am afraid they will fight."

"Oh, it has come to it, has it?" said Jemima, carelessly. "I thought it would. Never mind them, Miss Hereford; they'll not hurt you."

She tripped upstairs with the pail, as if a quarrel were the most natural event in the world, and I looked into the room again. Mr. Heneage held Philip King by the collar of the coat.

"Mark me!" he was saying; "If I catch you dodging my movements again, if I hear of your being insolent to this lady, I'll shoot you with as little compunction as I would a partridge. There!"

"What is Mrs. Edwin Barley to you, that you should interfere?" retorted Philip King, his voice raised to a shriek. "And she! Why does she set herself to provoke me every hour of my life?"

"I interfere of right: by my long friendship with her, and by the respect I bear for her mother's memory. Now you know."

Mr. Heneage gave a shake to the collar as he spoke, and I ran up to my room, there to sob out my fit of terror. My heart was beating, my breath catching itself in gasps. In my own peaceful home I had never seen or heard the faintest shadow of a quarrel.

By-and-by Jemima came in search of me. Mrs. Edwin Barley was waiting for me to go out in the pony carriage. I washed my face and my red eyes, was dressed, and went down. At the door stood a low open basket-chaise, large and wide, drawn by a pony. Mrs. Edwin Barley was already in it, and Mr. Heneage stood waiting for me. He drove, and I sat on a stool at their feet. We went through green lanes, and over a pleasant common. Not a word was said about the recent quarrel; but part of the time they spoke together in an under-tone, and I did not try to hear. We were away about two hours.

"You can run about the grounds until your dinner's ready, if you like, Anne," Mrs. Barley said to me when we alighted. "I dare say you feel cramped, sitting so long on that low seat."

She went in with Mr. Heneage, the footman saying that some ladies were waiting. I ran away amidst the trees, and presently lost myself. As I stood, wondering which way to take, Mr. Edwin Barley and Philip King came through, arm-in-arm, on their way home, talking together eagerly. I thought Philip King was telling about the quarrel.

It was no doubt unfortunate that my acquaintance with Mr. Edwin Barley should have begun with a fright. I was a most impressionable child, and *could not* get over that first fear. Every time I met him, my heart, as the saying runs, leaped into my mouth. He saw me, and spoke.

"So you have got back, Anne Hereford!"

"Yes, sir," I answered, my lips feeling as if they were glued together.

"Where's Mrs. Barley?"

"She is gone in-doors, sir."

"And George Heneage. Where's he?"

"He went in also, sir. John said some visitors were waiting to see Mrs. Barley."

And to that he made no rejoinder, but went on with Philip King.

Nothing more occurred that day to disturb the peace of the house. A gentleman, who called in the afternoon, was invited to dine, and stayed. Mrs. Edwin Barley rang for me as soon as she went up to the drawing-room. I thought how lovely she looked in her black net dress, and with the silver ornaments on her neck and arms.

"What did you think of Mr. Philip King's temper this morning, Anne?" she asked, as she stood near the fire and sipped the cup of coffee that John had brought in.

"Oh, Selina! I never was so alarmed before."

"You little goose! But it was a specimen, was it not, of gentlemanly bearing?"

"I think—I mean I thought—that it was not Mr. King who was in fault," I said; not, however, liking to say it.

"You thought it was George Heneage, I suppose. Ah! but you don't know all, Anne; the scenes behind the curtain are hidden to you. Philip King has wanted a chastisement this fortnight past; and he got

it. Unless he alters his policy, he will get one of a different nature. Mr. Heneage will as surely cane him as that I stand here."

"Why do you like Mr. Heneage so much, Selina?"

"I like him better than anybody I know, Anne. Not with the sort of liking, however, that Mr. Philip King would insinuate, the worthy youth! Though it is great fun," she added, with a merry laugh, "to let the young gentleman think I do. I have known George Heneage a long while: he used to visit at Keppe Carew, and be as one of ourselves. I could not like a brother, if I had one, more than I do George Heneage. And Mr. Philip King, and his ally, Charlotte Delves, tell tales of me to my husband! It is as good as a comedy."

A comedy! If she could but have foreseen the comedy's ending!

On the following morning, Saturday, they all went out shooting again. Mrs. Edwin Barley had visitors in the forenoon, and afterwards she drove over to Hallam in the pony carriage, with the little boy-groom Tom, not taking me. I was anywhere—with Charlotte Delves; with Jemima; reading a fairy-tale I found; playing "Poor Mary Anne" on the piano. As it grew towards dusk, and nobody came home, I went strolling down the avenue, and met the pony carriage. Only Tom was in it.

"Where is Mrs. Edwin Barley?"

"She is coming on, miss, with Mr. Heneage. He came up to the lodge-gate just as we got back."

I went to the end of the avenue, but did not see her. The woman at the lodge said they had taken the path on the left, which would equally bring them to the house, though by a greater round. I ran along it, and came to the pretty summer-house that stood where the ornamental grounds were railed off from the pasture at the back and the wood beyond. At the foot of the summer-house steps my aunt stood, straining her eyes on a letter, in the fading light; George Heneage was looking over her shoulder, a gun in his hand.

"You see what they say," he observed. "Rather peremptory, is it not?"

"George, you must go by the first train that starts from Nettleby," she returned. "You should not lose a minute; the pony carriage will take you. Is that you, Anne?"

"I would give something to know what's up, and why I am called for in this fashion," was his rejoinder, spoken angrily. "They might let me alone until the term I was invited for here is at an end."

Mrs. Edwin Barley laughed. "Perhaps our friend, Philip King, has favoured Heneage House with a communication, telling of your fancied misdoings."

No doubt she spoke it lightly, neither believing her own words nor heeding the fashion of them. But George Heneage took them seriously; and it unfortunately happened that she ran up the steps at the same moment. A stir was heard in the summer-house. Mr. Heneage dashed in. in time to see Philip King escaping by the opposite door.

The notion that he had been "spying" was, of course, taken up by Mr. Heneage. With a passionate word, he was speeding after him; but Mrs. Edwin Barley caught his arm.

"George, you shall not go. There might be murder done between you."

"I'll pay him off; I'll make him remember it! Pray release me. I beg your pardon, Selina."

For he had flung her hand away with rather too much force, in his storm of passion; and was crashing through the opposite door, and down the steps, in pursuit of Philip King. Both of them made straight for the wood; but Philip King had a good start, and nothing in his hand; George Heneage had his gun. Selina alluded to it.

"I hope it is not loaded! Flying along with that speed, he might strike it against a tree, and be shot before he knows it. Anne, look here! You are fleetier than I. Run you crossways over that side grass to the corner entrance; it will take you to a path in the wood where you will just meet them. Tell Mr. Heneage, from me, that I *command* him to come back, and to let Philip King alone. I command it, in his mother's name."

I did not dare to refuse, and yet scarcely dared to go. I ran along, my heart beating. Arrived at the entrance indicated I plunged in, and went on down many turns and windings amidst the trees. They were not very thick, and were intersected by narrow paths. But no one could I see.

And now arrived a small calamity. I had lost my way. How to trace an exit from the wood I knew not, and felt really frightened. Down I sat on an old stump, and cried. What if I should have to stay there until morning!

Not so. A slight noise made me look up. Who should be standing near, his back against a tree, smoking a cigar, and smiling at me, but Philip King.

"What is the grief, Miss Anne? Have you met a wolf?"

"I can't find my way out, sir."

"Oh, I'll soon show you that. We are almost close to the south border. You——"

He stopped suddenly, lifted his head, and looked attentively in a direction to the left. At that moment there came a report; something seemed to whizz through the air, and strike Philip King. He leaped up, and then fell to the ground with a scream. This was followed, so instantly that it seemed to be part and parcel of the scream, by a distant exclamation of dismay or of warning. From whom did it come?

Though not perfectly understanding what had occurred, or that Philip King had received a fatal shot, I screamed also, and fell on my knees; not fainting, but with a sick, horrible sensation of fear, such as perhaps

no child ever before experienced. And the next thing I saw was Mr. Edwin Barley, coming towards us with his gun, not quite from the same direction, but very near it. I had been thinking that George Heneage must have done it, but another question arose now to my terrified heart : Could it have been Mr. Edwin Barley?

"Philip, what is it?" he asked, as he came up. "Has any one fired at you?"

"George Heneage," was the faint rejoinder. "I saw him. He stood there."

With a motion of the eyes, rather than with aught else, poor Philip King pointed to the left, and Mr. Edwin Barley turned and looked, laying his gun against a tree. Nothing was to be seen.

"Are you sure, Philip?"

"I tell it you with my dying lips. I saw him."

Not another word. Mr. Edwin Barley raised his head, but the face had grown still, and had an awful shade upon it—the same shade that mamma's first wore after she was dead. Mr. Barley put the head gently down, and stood looking at him. All in a moment he caught sight of me, and I think it startled him.

"Are *you* there, you little imp?"

But the word, ugly though it sounds, was spoken in rough surprise, not in unkindness. I cried and shook, too terrified to give any answer. Mr. Barley stood up before Philip King, so that I no longer saw him.

"What were you doing in the wood?"

"I lost my way, and could not get out, sir," I sobbed, trembling lest he should press for further details. "That gentleman saw me, and was saying he would show me the way out, when he fell."

"Had he been here long?"

"I don't know. I was crying a good while, and not looking up. It was only a minute ago that I saw him standing there."

"Did you see Mr. Heneage fire?"

"Oh no, sir. I did not see Mr. Heneage at all."

He took my hand, walked with me a few steps, and showed me a path that was rather wider than the others.

"Go straight down here until you come to a cross-path, running right and left: it is not far. Take the one to the right, and it will bring you out in front of the house. Do you understand, little one?"

"Yes, sir," I answered, though, in truth, too agitated to understand distinctly, and only anxious to get away from him. Suppose he should shoot me! was running through my foolish thoughts.

"Make speed to the house, then," he resumed, "and see Charlotte Delves. Tell her what has occurred: that Philip King has been shot, and that she must send help to convey him home. She must also send at once for the doctor, and for the police. Can you remember all that?"

"Oh yes, sir. Is he much hurt?"

"He is dead, child. Now, be as quick as you can. Do not tell your aunt what has happened: it would alarm her."

I sped along quicker than any child ever sped before, and soon came to the cross-path. But there I made a mistake: I went blindly on to the left, instead of to the right, and I came suddenly upon Mr. Heneage. He was standing quite still, leaning on his gun, his finger on his lip to impose silence and caution on me, and his face looked as I had never seen it look before, white as death.

"Whose voice was that I heard talking to you?" he asked, in a whisper.

"Mr. Edwin Barley's. Oh, sir, don't stop me; Mr. King is dead!"

"Dead! Mr. King dead?"

"Yes, sir. Mr. Edwin Barley says so, and I am on my way to the house to tell Miss Delves to send for the police. Mr. Heneage, did you do it?"

"I! You silly child!" he returned, in an accent of rebuke. "What in the world put that in your head? I have been looking for Philip King—waiting here in the hope that he might pass. There, go along, child, and don't tremble so. That way: you are coming from the house, this."

Back I went, my fears increasing. To an imaginative, excitable, and timid nature, such as mine, all this was simply terrible. I did gain the house, but only to rush into the arms of Jemima, who happened to be in the hall, and fall into a fit of hysterical, nervous, sobbing cries, clinging to her tightly, as if I could never let her go again.

A pretty messenger, truly, in time of need!

(To be continued.)

ALONE IN THE FOREST.

THE colonies of Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice, forming what is known as British Guiana, are among the most beautiful in natural scenery, and the most fertile of any regions in the world. Of their vast forests, magnificent plains, and noble rivers, generally, very little is known. Nevertheless, they are full of poetry in themselves, and were the seat of romance in days of yore.

It was in the interior of these regions, where nature revels in all that is magnificent and grand, that the ancients placed the lake Parima and the famous city of Manoa, the capital of the long-sought-for El Dorado.

Though surrounded with the romance of a past age, and described in the glowing language of Indian poetry, from what we now know of the ruined cities of Central America, there appears no valid reason why we should set down this legend as a mere figment of the brain.

A city with palaces of gold, and streets paved with precious stones, reflecting their dazzling beauties in the transparent waters of an extensive lake, sounds to the prosaic mind very much like fiction; but if we divest it of its fairy-tale-like embellishments, after the splendid architectural monuments, telling of a high, but now extinct, civilization, discovered by Stephens, buried in the very heart of the forest, who shall say that such a city, and such a lake, never existed?

It is true that search after search has been made, and that most of the rivers have been explored, without finding any trace of either; but who that knows anything of the vast primeval forests which extend between these rivers, and which the foot of civilized man in our time has never trod, will think these searches conclusive? Indeed, the probability of their existence is very much enhanced by the facts which recent travellers have discovered; for from these we learn that either by a grand convulsion of nature, or by some other means, the rocky barriers which cross some portions of the rivers have been broken down, and their waters thereby considerably lowered. It may be, therefore, that the lake has been drained, and the city is buried in the forest.

At any rate, such was the theory I had built up; and some years since, being on the spot, and having leisure and opportunity, I determined to put it to the test.

Accordingly, I and a party of friends chartered a colonial schooner to carry us as far as the missionary station of Barateka, near to which the Cuyuna and Mazaroni form their junction with the great river Essequibo. From this place it was our intention to take a sufficient

number of corials—native canoes—and, with a party of Indians as guides and rowers, to proceed to explore the unknown windings of the Cuyuna. Having made all our arrangements, on a fine morning in the middle of July, we embarked from George Town in the "Governor Barkly," and, after getting a good offing, with a fresh easterly breeze, we bore away for the mouth of the Essequibo. As the day progressed the breeze proved treacherous, and by twelve o'clock the sails were flapping against the masts, and the "Governor Barkly" was boxing all round the compass.

My companions, three in number, consisted of a young English surgeon, named Saunders, a raw ensign, named Calvert, and a Mr. Bing, a Demerara merchant, a short, stout, jolly fellow, of about forty. His complexion had originally been fair, but from sun-tan, good living, and brandy, had become of a reddish-brown; his most prominent feature was his nose, which was conspicuous for its size and redness.

Hour after hour passed, but we still lay becalmed, the sails continued to flap, the vessel to roll, and I and my companions to puff and perspire.

About three o'clock the wind came rippling in from seaward—at first in sweet, cool, airy puffs, and then it became steady. For a second or two the schooner was all aback, the sails flapped loudly, and then swelling out, with a graceful motion, the schooner fell off, bore away on her course, and by five o'clock we were threading our way among the group of islands which extend across the mouth of the river.

The following day we reached the missionary station. Here we were detained several days, not being able to get the sort of canoes necessary for our purpose, nor a sufficient supply of bread. At last, finding we were not likely to succeed at Barateka, we determined to proceed higher up to an Indian settlement, where it was said we could obtain what we wanted. Accordingly, on the following day, with two large canoes, we started for the unexplored regions of the Cuyuna.

There is something very fascinating in the idea of penetrating into an unknown region, no matter how sterile or barren it may be; but when, as in our case, every yard we advanced brought us in contact with something new and beautiful, how much stronger was the spell! Every trace of civilization had vanished; we were encompassed by a sea of foliage—here the forest reigned triumphant!

As we advanced, at one time a crash among the reeds and brushwood on the banks would be followed by the appearance of a tapir—the American elephant—coming down to drink, and roll himself in the mud; at another, the manati, or sea-cow, an amphibious animal of the hippopotamus species, would lift its black head and small piercing eyes above the water, and look at us; or else, as we turned a corner, a shoal of alligators, sunning themselves on the bank, would plounce into the water and skulk off before our canoes.

Towards ten o'clock we came to the entrance of a creek, at the head

of which was situated the settlement we were in search of. Leaving the rapid and turbid current of the Cuyuna, we shot into its clear and quiet waters. From the heat and almost insufferable brightness of the torrid sunshine, a few strokes of the paddle brought us into the most delicious shade. The contrast between this and the fervid glare of the river added a special beauty to the scene. A more arcadian spot could not well be imagined. The banks were lined on either side with most gigantic trees, which, except here and there, drooped over towards each other, till they nearly touched. Down this leafy avenue, which was lit, or rather toned, into a marvellous chiaroscuro, by a subdued green light, moving softly upon the face of the waters came a cool, refreshing air; while far away, at the termination of the vista, the sun-light, streaming in through a break in the foliage, cast a chequered shadow upon the waters. From either side wild vines [and lianes, mingled with gay-blossomed parasites, after twirling, corkscrew-like, up the loftiest trees, intertwined like the strands of a cable, and drooping down, formed festoons of flowers, which extended from side to side, scented the air with their fragrance, and formed bridges for shoals of monkeys which sported above our heads. Nature, however, not satisfied with covering the banks with all sorts of picturesque forms, decorating the trunks and limbs of the trees, and garnishing their branches with wreaths of flowers, had covered the water on either side with a carpet of plants, conspicuous among which were the magnificent flowers of that queen of aquatics, the *Victoria Regia*.

As we silently moved on, threading the narrow line of transparent water, which wound its way among the gigantic leaves of the lilies, bright-coloured fish glanced across our path; toucans, macaws, parrots, and birds of a hundred varieties, clothed in the most brilliant and varied plumage, perched on the branches, or flew across our path. Humming-birds and butterflies, exhibiting the most exquisite tints and colours, danced in the air, or flitted from flower to flower, sipping their fragrant nectar, or sported with the dew-drops which glittered on their petals.

All was calm and still, except now and then, when the silence was broken by the screaming and chattering of the monkeys, as they skuttered off at our approach, or by the shrill call of the macaws, as they looked down upon us from their lofty perches. The air was filled with the odour of plants, flowers, and trees. Indeed, it is impossible to describe the rich fragrance which the breeze wafted towards us, in most delicious freshness, or the beautiful glimpses of the azure vaults of heaven, which we caught among the embowering branches of the trees. It was a verdant paradise, in which Nature seemed to have concentrated all her powers, clothing everything with her richest ornaments, and realizing some of those splendid scenes described in Arabian story.

Towards mid-day we came to a place where we could land—a fine opening, clear of bush, and here we decided to cook our dinner. For a time the crackling of the fire, the bustling of the negroes, and the

voices of the Indians, as they laughingly prepared their food, prevented my noticing the difference between the clamour of a tropical midnight and the profound silence of its noon. Everything was motionless ; not a sound came from the creek ; not an animal moved ; every bird and every beast had sought shelter from the heat in the deep recesses of the forest.

Notwithstanding the fatigues of the morning, we all made a hearty meal, after which followed smoking, and finally, as the produce of our guns was expected to form part of our subsistence, we dispersed into the nearest covers, in search of game.

The first thing I met with was a flock of pigeons, two of which I brought down with the first shot. I secured my birds, and then I saw that the rest had alighted in a hollow, which, spite of considerable difficulty, I succeeded in reaching ; but having been frightened, the birds were shy, and after putting them up several times without getting a shot, I thought it advisable to retrace my steps.

I arrived at this determination in the midst of a mass of the thickest underwood, and when I turned round I was startled to find that not a trace of my advance was to be seen ; and, to make matters worse, I had neglected to take the bearings of the encampment, and had not noticed any objects whereby I could track my way back. While standing thus, in great perplexity and suspense, I heard at a short distance a rustling among the underwood. I listened, and plainly discovered that the noise, soft and stealthy as it was, was each moment approaching nearer. I could think of nothing but that a jaguar, or a puma, or some other wild animal, was stealing towards me ; and hastily extracting the shot from my gun, I replaced it with a bullet, and then, withdrawing behind a tree, I remained on my guard, quite still. I did so because I knew it was no use trying to escape ; in short, it would be the worst thing I could attempt, for I stood no chance with these animals in the way of speed ; and I knew also that these American lions and tigers were cowardly animals, and that my best chance was to put a bold front on it, and either attack or intimidate them.

Slowly, the rustling came nearer and nearer, and presently the bushes in front of me began to move and tremble. I stood with my gun cocked, expecting every minute to see the head of some animal protrude from among the foliage ; but though the movement of the bushes continued, I could see nothing. Presently, something glistened among the grass, and I saw the body of a snake—the head and tail were hid by the leaves—slowly gliding across my path. It was quite certain that he had no idea of my proximity, though he had passed close before me ; and in another instant, to my great relief, I saw his tail disappear, and the bushes resume their usual quietude.

It may be imagined that this incident did not render my recollection of my situation any more vivid, nor recall to my mind anything to guide me back to the encampment. I shouted, but no answer came.

I plunged about in several directions, but I could discover no traces of my advance; and in despair I started off, haphazard, into the leafy labyrinth, now and then stopping to shout, in the hope that my voice might reach the ears of some of my party.

I toiled on through the intricate mazes of the forest for an hour or more—now diverging in one direction, and now in another; now making the woods resound with my cries and shouts, and now running heedlessly, and to my great peril, into bees' nests, leaving rags of cloth and shreds of flesh among the briars and prickly sword-grass along my path. Finding at last that I could discern no signs of the encampment, nor any traces of my party, it began slowly to dawn upon my somewhat bewildered senses that I was lost, and that, for aught I knew, instead of getting nearer to succour, I had been making my way farther into the bush, and that my chance of finding my way back, or of being aided by my friends, was every minute getting smaller and smaller.

Up to this period I had been so engrossed with the one object uppermost in my mind, that of getting back to the encampment, that I had not perceived how faint and weary I was getting; but when I paused, I felt that my strength was nearly exhausted. The heat of the forest, coupled with the exertions I had made, had caused me to perspire freely, so that my clothes, or rather what remained of them, were saturated; my blood too was in a state of fever, and my thirst was so great that I felt I must find water or die.

The loneliness, the peril, and the helplessness of my situation, all flashed upon me suddenly, and the thought of dying in this forest filled my brain with such horrifying ideas, that I involuntarily uttered a cry of the most intense anguish; though I had no hope of being heard, still I listened for an answer, but none came, save the echo of my own voice.

The next half-hour was spent in searching for water, but in vain. At last, completely exhausted, I sat down to rest. I had hardly seated myself, when I was startled by the sound of a bell. It was loud, clear, and sonorous, like the notes of a village clock, striking three times. I started to my feet and listened: was it real, or was it only a delusion? No, it was no delusion, for again it tolled three times, and then paused. A sort of dread came creeping over me, for I remembered that "three times three" was the finale of the death-knell, and indicated the passing away of a man. I listened eagerly for the third repetition.

It came, and then all was silent.

"Yes," I said, "that's it—three times three for a man; but," I continued, thinking to myself, "it certainly was a bell, and, if so, there must have been some one to toll it." I had heard that a Roman Catholic missionary had established himself somewhere out in these wilds, and had built a chapel; and I arrived at the very natural con-

clusion that the station was not far off, and that the sound came from thence.*

Full of this idea, I pushed on in the direction from which the sounds came, making the woods re-echo with my shouts. But no answering shout gladdened my ears; and at last I, with a heavy heart, threw myself on the ground, in an agony of despair.

After a time I rose up, and collecting a quantity of dry wood, I struck a light, and made a fire. I had pertinaciously clung to my two pigeons, and, after plucking off the feathers, I proceeded to dress them. As they cooked, they sent forth a savoury odour; but though my stomach yearned for food, so great was my thirst that, without something to cool my parched throat, I doubted if I could masticate it.

As I sat, I began to recount to myself the quantity of water I had used wastefully, and thought what would I not now give for one glass of it! I shuddered at the idea of beer or wine—it was water, water only, that I wanted. In the midst of these thoughts I fancied I heard a sound. I stopped and listened; and as it became plainer, my heart beat quickly. It was the singing murmur of a brook; at least, I thought so. I rose and followed the sound, and who shall describe the thankfulness of my heart when, after a protracted search, I discovered a pool of water, fresh and clear! I drank freely, bathed my face and hands, and then returned to my fire a new creature. My pigeons were now done, and I ate a hearty meal, though I must confess that the want of salt and bread was rather a drawback.

At last night set in, and, heaping up wood on my fire, I sat down to smoke. The moon had not risen, and all around, beyond the radius of the fire-light, was black and dark, the interlaced foliage shutting out the starlight. As the flames of my fire rose and fell, the huge boles and stems of the trees in the distance assumed fantastic shapes, while every now and then I was startled by the crash of branches, as some wild animal dashed through the thicket, or splashed into a hidden pool; then again, after intervals of silence, came the roaring of a tiger, now sullen and distant, and now sharp and near. Huge vampire-bats circled above my head; night birds flew past, hooting hoarsely; strange noises, as of voices calling to me, came from distant parts of the woods—at one time so natural, that I rose and shouted in answer, but the only reply I got was the mocking echo of my own voice. Startling as were all these noises, the feeling which possessed my mind was more of awe than terror; and this arose not so much because I was surrounded by wild and savage animals, as from the utter loneliness of my situation.

At times I dozed off, but actual sleep was out of the question. If nothing else occurred to rouse me, the thought of how this was all to end caused me to start up and pace the ground wildly.

* These sounds proceeded from the Campanero, or Bell-bird, whose tolling notes are often heard in the forests of Guiana.

At one moment my hope lay in my friends. They would be certain to search for me; but in these trackless forests would they be able to find me? And if not—what then? I shuddered to contemplate such a climax, for I knew that I might wander about in these immeasurable wilds for months without meeting with a human being.

As if to intensify the feelings which were saddening my heart, and every moment fastening themselves more strongly on my imagination, at this moment something, whether a bird or a beast I knew not, uttered a prolonged and most human-like cry of distress. It was a sobbing wail of the most hopeless anguish, again and again repeated. This was answered, apparently from a distance, by another voice equally human, exclaiming "Work away, work away, work away," now appearing close by, and now far distant.*

While watching the fire-flies, as they threw out shower after shower of mimic fireworks, and listening to these strange and novel sounds, at last I fell asleep. My rest was only bodily, for mentally I was racked by the most terrific dreams.

With the first glimpse of dawn I was awakened by the yelping bark of a dog. I had become sceptical as to the sounds of civilized life; but this was so like a small dog that I could not help rising and looking about me; this seemed to produce an extra chorus of "Wow, wow, wow," from an army of little curs, accompanied by a mournful cry of "Hoo-too, hoo-too," followed by more yelpings, which I then perceived came from a number of toucans, which were assembled in the trees near by.

Notwithstanding my terrible dreams, when I was fairly awake I found myself much rested and refreshed. My breakfast was a sorry one, consisting of a copious draught from the brook; and hardly daring to think of what the day might produce, I started once more in search of my friends. During the vigil of the past night I had thought long and earnestly as to the course I ought to pursue, and I had decided that my best chance was to take a north-easterly direction. My first object, therefore, was to obtain a sight of the sun, so that I might get what sailors call the bearings of the forest.

From the nature of the ground, and the impenetrable thickness of the trees over my head, this was difficult to do. Still, though I could not get a sight of the sun himself, I got something like an approximate idea of his position. This done, and having come across a tree covered with fruit of the plum kind, upon which I observed the parrots feeding, I partook freely, and with a light heart I pursued my way. For nearly seven hours I travelled on through these intricate mazes without stopping, not forgetting every now and then to make the forest ring with my

* These were the notes of the Goatsucker, a species of nocturnal bird, which, when night reigns in these woods, may be heard lamenting like one in distress. A stranger would never conceive it to be the cry of a bird: anything more painful cannot be imagined.

cries and shouts. At last nature was getting exhausted, and I stopped to rest.

Those only who have experienced what it is to travel through the tangled bush of a South American forest, where the moist air generates innumerable hosts of mosquitoes and other venomous insects, whose bites render a European almost mad, can understand the state of torture under which this part of my journey was performed. Perspiring at every pore; overwhelmed with a thirst which, since the early morning, I had not been able to quench; my flesh torn, and my garments reduced almost to nothing by scrambling through the brake, I was in a truly pitiable plight, and I began to think that death would be preferable to a longer continuance of the pain and anguish I experienced.

Exhausted as I was, I had no sooner seated myself than I was obliged to rise again. It was high noon, and the heat had drawn up a misty exhalation, a sort of mephitic vapour, which nearly suffocated me, causing a gasping, choking sensation, which was exceedingly painful. In short, what with anxiety, irritation, and fatigue, I felt that I was verging on high fever or madness, and that the only way to keep it under was to push on till I reached a place where I could get more air.

On, on, on, through briar and brake, I fought my way, till I came to a part of the forest where the brush almost ceased; and here, with a feeling of thankfulness which words are powerless to express, I threw myself down on the soft moss. But my thirst was too painful for me to do other than rest temporarily; and I arose and searched for water. Of spring or rivulet there was no sign; but I soon found that a beneficent Creator had provided in other ways for the thirsty forest traveller.

Prompted by curiosity, I examined a sort of wild pine, or parasite, which grew upon many of the trees, the leaves of which formed a natural bucket or reservoir, and which, on inspecting, I found to contain as much as a quart of pure water. I was not long in quenching my thirst; and this done, I again threw myself on the soft turf to rest. I believe I slept for some time, and when I awoke, though I was still suffering a martyrdom from the bites of the insects, I felt I had much to be thankful for.

This part of the forest presented an aspect altogether novel, but singularly impressive. The trees, which grew to a size and height which it was startling to look upon, seemed arranged more according to the rules of art than the caprice of nature, forming a long vista of pillared and arched aisles, like the nave of some giant cathedral.

I had been previously greatly struck with the floral beauties of the forest; but here, the soft green moss, with its embroidery of flowers, which carpeted every inch of the ground; the delicacy and luxuriance of the creepers, which clothed the stems of the trees, and hung pendant from the lofty branches like verdant chandeliers; the variety and elegance of the air plants; the singularity and beauty of the parasites;

and the vivid but harmonious arrangement of colours, arising from the mingling of these flowers, threw into the shade all I had previously seen, and the gorgeous effect of which it is impossible to depict.

Equally futile would it be to attempt to give any just idea of the awe which the grandeur, the vastness, and the silence—if I may so call it—by which I was surrounded, inspired me.

It will appear almost paradoxical to say that, amid profound silence, Nature raised her voice in a tuneful melody; but yet it was so. As I lay, a low, musical buzz, now rising, now falling, came from all sides of me: it was the low, joyous humming of the myriads of insects which inhabited the moss on which I lay—one of the many voices of Nature, by means of which she can speak to the pious and susceptible heart of man, and reveal to him the power and wisdom of his Almighty Creator.

Shortly after this, though there were fewer birds, I soon began to discover that this part of the forest was not without its inhabitants. First came the monkeys, who, refreshed by their siesta, executed the most extraordinary manœuvres; now chasing each other across the woody arches, now springing from the topmost branches, catching the pendant vines, and swinging in mid-air, uttering exultant cries at their own agility. Squirrels, birds, and other animals jumped from bough to bough, or sported among the vine-branches. In short, the whole forest seemed suddenly to swarm with life and echo with sounds of enjoyment. Reptiles and insects, too, began to show themselves in extraordinary numbers; in short, the grass and moss on which I lay was alive with them. Lizards, in the gayest and most brilliant liveries, thrust forth their bright-eyed faces, gazed inquisitively at me, and then darted away, only to return and gaze again; while beetles and grasshoppers of enormous size darted or crawled about near me.

The picture was certainly a glorious one; but its very tranquillity and beauty, and the calm tone of enjoyment which pervaded it, only rendered me more sad.

Was I to perish alone in the forest, far from all who loved me, with no one to soothe my last struggle, or to close my eyes in death? The pang which shot through my heart as I mentally realized such a fate was excruciating, and I covered my face and burst into tears. My mind was in a perfect maze; I felt utterly powerless, lost irretrievably in the intricacies of these wilds, and without hope of receiving succour. Up to this I had been so supine, that though the monkeys had often been within shot, I had never attempted to fire at them. At last one fellow, more impertinent than the rest, paid the penalty for his curiosity, and was cooked for my supper.

After this I sat and smoked, and as the shade grew deeper my feelings grew calmer. The magic power of hope was gradually clearing away the clouds which had obscured my mind. I saw that the whole of the animal world was, like myself, dependent on the bounties of

that All-merciful and Almighty Being, who, if it was His will, could furnish a table in the wilderness, and supply rivers of water in a thirsty land ; and with this thought I fell asleep.

I awoke next morning with a dull pain in my head, and a parched and feverish tongue. With a draught from one of the wild pines, spite of my weakness and lassitude, I struggled on.

For many long hours I battled with the almost impenetrable woods without seeing any sign of man, either Indian or civilized. The nature of the ground I was traversing required great physical exertion ; but, notwithstanding, onward I went, forcing my way through the dense thicket, now dragging myself through mud-holes, and now stumbling over fallen trees, till at last I was brought to a standstill by a mass of broken rock, covered with cactus.

Footsore, exhausted, and ill, I sat down. I could go no farther. I believe I must have fainted ; at any rate, for a time I was quite unconscious of all around me. I now gave up all hope of ever extricating myself from this interminable wilderness, for I felt that death was fast approaching me. Suddenly the full horror of my position burst upon me, and, with the energy of despair, I started up and staggered on, I knew not and cared not whither.

A strange feeling of torpor, of madness, passed through my brain ; things seemed to swim around me, and I reeled and fell to the ground. With an effort I got on my feet again, but again I reeled and fell. I lay for some time in a drowsy state of indifference. I seemed not to care whether I lived or died. At one moment I was conscious that my last hour was approaching, and I tried to pray ; but the next I was wandering, and knew not what I said.

I felt that I ought to strive to prepare for death ; but I feared it was too late. How all the means of grace and opportunities of repentance which I had neglected rose up and confronted me ! I had always consoled myself with the idea that I was young, and that death and eternity were a long way off ; and now the grim destroyer was upon me ! How stupid, how positively suicidal seemed my past indifference and neglect ! How insignificant did the world, its joys and pleasures, appear to me, standing there on the brink of eternity ! In my anguish, cold drops of perspiration fell from my brow, and an agonizing cry to Him who alone could afford me help and succour broke from my lips.

This was followed by a time of perfect oblivion : how long it lasted I had no idea. Suddenly, however, a new existence dawned upon me. I opened my eyes, but the brightness which shone around me was so overpowering that I closed them again, and endeavoured to arrange the confused multitude of ideas that thronged tumultuously through my brain. All, however, was so vague and indistinct that I gave up the attempt in despair.

After awhile all this passed away, and I found myself lying in a

hammock, suspended in a small hut, completely embowered by large trees; in front of which, but at some distance, sat two or three dark-haired women. They were all well-proportioned, their skin was fair, and they were clothed in a singular but very picturesque costume. Their chief article of attire was a loose blue cotton petticoat, fastened at the waist; while a drapery of the same material was thrown gracefully over one of their shoulders. Their necks, arms, wrists, and ankles, were ornamented with bright-coloured beads, and their hair, which was straight and black, fell in luxuriant masses on their shoulders.

When I had closed my eyes, as I had imagined for ever in this world, I little expected that I should open them again on such a scene as this. Was it a vision or a dream?—were these mortals?—or were they the dryads of these woods? An exclamation which broke from my lips put an end to all doubts, for they started to their feet, and approached me with glad cries. Smiles lighted up their faces, and they poured out a torrent of words, not one of which could I understand. The next instant, to my inexpressible delight, I saw my friends, Bing and Saunders, enter the hut.

I felt a strong inclination to spring out and embrace them, but found I had not even strength to raise my head.

"What has been the matter with me?" I asked.

"Not another word," exclaimed Saunders; "I prohibit talking. Take this, and go to sleep again," and then he murmured to himself, "Thank God, the crisis is past!"

When I had swallowed the draught, I fell asleep, and did not wake for some hours.

I was rather curious to know how I had been rescued, and what had been the matter with me; but it was some days before I was considered strong enough to talk.

One morning, however, Bing and Saunders entered my hut, the former with a cheery smile, exclaiming, "How are you? how are you? Ah! better, I see! Well, now to give you a good wiggling! Don't you think you deserve it?"

"I dare say I do; but you must explain," I replied.

"Well, now, aren't you a nice fellow to go searching after lost cities, eh?—a pretty dance you led us!"

"I certainly had a most difficult search; but it was not after a lost city, it was after my lost companions."

"And when you found them—or rather when they found you—in your delirium you insisted that they were monkeys, and that your humble servant was a cod-fish!"

"Then it was you that found me. Indeed, I never doubted that you would make every effort; my only doubt was, whether you would succeed."

"Well, we did search, and that for many days, long after we had

given up all hope of finding you alive ; but we determined, if we could do nothing more, at least to find your body, and bury it."

"Of which kind office," I replied, laughing, "I have managed to disappoint you."

"Come, come," said he, gravely; "no joking, my friend."

"I found it no joke, I can tell you," I continued; "but now tell me, how and where did you find me?"

"Well, we did not find you at all. After searching about for five days for your dead body, we heard of your living self, at an Indian village, some twenty miles from where you started. It appears that two of the women, going down to a spring for water, found you half-dead in the bush. They made a litter of boughs, and bore you back to the village, where you had been two days when we heard of you. Saunders and I, with a couple of Indians to carry some food, wine, and medicine, started at once; and when we arrived we found you in a high fever."

"Ah!" he went on, shaking his head; "you had a very narrow squeak for your life; for when you were, as we thought, recovering, you had a relapse; but, with the blessing of Providence, and the help of Saunders, you battled through it."

"I shall never be able to repay you both for all your kindness," I said.

"Not after the same fashion, I hope, at any rate," he replied.

I was obliged to remain at the settlement for some days longer, though, thanks to a sound and vigorous constitution, my period of convalescence was a short one. At length I was considered strong enough to bear the fatigues of the journey back, and bidding adieu to and rewarding my kind Indian friends, we made our way back to George Town, leaving the discovery of the source of the Cuyuna, and the site of the famous city of Manoa for some more fortunate or more cautious travellers.



TEN YEARS A NUN.

BY HESBA STRETTON.

YOU wish to hear in full detail an account of my sojourn and adventure in a French Convent, of which you have only received the incomplete and unsatisfactory outlines. I went to France, as you know, against the wishes of my family and friends, having accepted a situation in a school there as English teacher. It is enough to say about that school, that no decent English girl could have stayed, so utter was the dirt, discomfort, and barbarism pervading it. I was compelled to leave it, but I was extremely reluctant to quit France without accomplishing my object, which was to perfect myself in the language; more especially as my friends had objected to the enterprise from the first. I travelled back, however, from the interior to a small sea-port town, from which the transit to England was easy; and during my journey I took counsel with myself, and calculated my remaining stock of money, amounting to a little more than twenty-six pounds.

I had made up my mind before I reached the terminus, and there I inquired if there was any English consul in the town. Certainly there was, at least a vice-consul; and, for the small consideration of half a franc, a polite porter conducted me to his office. I entered it with some diffidence, and confronted three clerks, seated at the orthodox high desks, who bestowed upon me the orthodox, clerkly stare. The vice-consul was summoned, and proved to be a German, who spoke English and French with equally amusing blunders. However, he was all kindness, and after due deliberation, he asked if I should object to go into a convent. I felt a slight shock at first, but a few minutes' thought decided me to go, and I said so. In that case, he replied, he could be of service to me, for without doubt he could obtain my admission into a convent in the town on the morrow. In the meantime, he would see me safely lodged in an hotel for the night.

I must pass over my night alone in a foreign hotel, though there is a good deal I might tell you about it. In the morning the vice-consul came as appointed, and told me that I could be received into the convent for two pounds a month. The terms suited my means, as you see, and I accepted them gladly; so I gave twenty pounds into his hands, asking him to call each month and pay the sum agreed upon. I went with him to the convent, in a mood of cheerful alacrity, with my sense

of the romantic fanned to a flame, picturing it as a gray, solemn, ecclesiastical building, standing in a vast, antique garden, surrounded by high, massive walls. Judge, then, of my disappointment, when I found a new brick building, not unlike an English workhouse, presenting a flat front of four storeys to a dull street; on the other side of which were a few gloomy old houses, that seemed injured by the fresh paint and red brickwork of the upstart convent. The vice-consul and I entered a bare waiting-room, something like those of prisons and hospitals, which was divided by a grille of iron bars about three inches apart, behind which was a nun, fat, rosy, and about forty years old, who was jabbering in rapid French to a peasant woman on our side of the grille. We were summoned to the upper end of the room, where Madame la Supérieure waited to give us an interview; and she and I looked keenly at one another through the grating. I saw a face comely and shrewd, and bearing the unmistakable traits of a lady under the white coiffure which concealed her hair; the fine lips might have been chiselled in marble, to express rule and decision; and the eyes, hazel-gray, instead of the common dark-brown of French eyes, had a directness and penetration of gaze which I could only bear with difficulty.

"Mademoiselle is not so young as I supposed," she said to the vice-consul; "she will not submit to the strictness of our rules. We permit our boarders to go out but once a month, and then under supervision. Her letters will be read before she sends them out, or receives them, and she will not be allowed to hold any private conversation, except with me or one of the sisters."

The rules were rather too strict to be quite agreeable; but I had made up my mind to go into that convent, especially as the elegant and polished accent of Madame struck upon my ear as altogether the best French I had ever heard.

"I can submit to the rules," I said, and she smiled approval; "but will you let me see this gentleman once a month, when he comes to discharge my obligations to you?"

"Certainly: yes," replied Madame, graciously.

"And if any of my friends," I continued, "should come here to see me, you will not refuse them? It is not probable, but it might happen."

"Without doubt," she answered, as affably as before.

I bade the vice-consul good-bye, almost affectionately, for he was my last friend in the wicked world I should quit when I entered those barred doors, and I felt something like tears in my eyes; but I was bent upon going through with my purpose, and the convent seemed the only home open to me in that strange land. The Supérieure called a nun to show me to my chamber; and the door of the waiting-room was locked the instant we had passed through it. I felt that, like Esau, I had sold my birthright—the right of freedom. This feeling grew as I traversed the exquisitely clean, but bare, empty passages and apartments of the

interior, with doors locked or bolted, near each of which sat a sister, with keys fastened to her girdle. The lower windows, towards the street, were barred, a thick iron cross forming a portion of the bars, as if that blessed emblem were a token of captivity instead of liberty. But in my attic in the roof, where I felt sure I should be locked up at night, the casement opened wide, like doors, letting in the full freedom of light and air. I soon grew reconciled to the locking-up, and the everlasting sound of the keys ceased to grate upon my ear. I became used to the confinement also, and felt that it was adventurous enough to stand at my open window and look out upon the beauties of the land and sea, or upon little street-pictures, which I could see, like *tableaux vivants*, in the queer little slums and alleys of the town, which my high position commanded.

The sisters, with the exception of the Supérieure and one other, were as uninteresting a set of women as you can imagine. They were the ordinary Dorcas ladies, and tract-distributors, and district-visitors of our Protestant churches, playing at religion, as nuns, in a convent. Taking them in the mass, they were narrow-minded, self-satisfied women, mostly middle-aged, fond of gossip, and inclined to nurse their little ailments, though they could not have the luxury of a doctor unless they were dangerously ill. The Supérieure was a lady by birth, intensely proud and ambitious, covetous to an excess, but admirably qualified for managing her large and troublesome family. I saw but little of her, for she had no time to give to an insignificant person like me.

But was there no ideal nun among them? Certainly: a slender, graceful woman, about thirty, with the traces of great beauty left in her faded face. She moved, solitary and sad, amidst the self-satisfied and stupid sisterhood surrounding her. My education was committed chiefly to her, and my conversion, as I learned later. There were many other boarders, but all French and all Catholic, and, consequently, less interesting than an English heretic. Sister Catherine attached herself to me. At first our conversations were necessarily limited, but I made rapid progress in the language; and though I could not expound and defend our Protestant doctrines, I could soon perfectly comprehend all that was said to me, and I listened with a laudable attention, until Sister Catherine was persuaded that I was near conversion. This impression at once increased her attachment to me, and at the same time threw the Supérieure off her guard as to the nature of the confidential intimacy which was established between the sister and me.

It was at two or three different times that I learned the history of Sister Catherine, which is simply as true as that I am now writing it. When only a girl of fifteen she had been sought in marriage by a cousin of her own, to whom her parents' sole objection arose from an old quarrel existing between them and his father. It was the old story of the feud between the Montagues and Capulets, with the added bitter-

ness of blood-relationship. The cousin had prevailed upon Hortense—her baptismal name—to fly from her home with him, and as it is simply impossible to contract a secret marriage in France, he had brought her to this convent, a hundred leagues from her father's house, and placed her in it as a boarder, until she was of age to serve her parents with a legal notice that she intended to unite herself in marriage with her cousin, Pierre de Forville. The Supérieure was made their confidante; and as there were still six years to wait, Pierre, to mislead the vigilance of the parents, as well as of the police, resolved upon filling up the long interval with foreign travel, which would enable him to correspond with Hortense without danger of discovery.

This correspondence made happy the life of the cloistered girl, who was not fretted by convent rules as I was, and who had, moreover, her religious duties to occupy some of her time. But at last—it is an old story—Pierre's letters ceased to come, and one only, a brief note, written by a strange physician in an Italian city, announced his death by cholera. The heart of Hortense was broken, and her health failed her. For four years she remained in her chamber, as much invalided in mind as body, during which time her father died, and she came into the inheritance of a third portion of his property, amounting to nearly seven thousand pounds. By his death she became one of the wealthiest inmates of the convent, and before long, her mind, weak and wavering, became impressed with the duty of taking the vows among the sisterhood. I could fancy easily the shrewd, subtle, covetous spirit of Madame la Supérieure pressing towards the rich prize of seven thousand pounds, and the small chance that the enfeebled and disconsolate girl would have against her. It ended by her taking the veil at the age of twenty-one, the time when she should have married Pierre de Forville.

I suppose that Sister Catherine was not more unhappy than Hortense de Forville would have been. Everything was settled now; all was ended; her whole life, henceforth, was to trickle slowly through the narrow channel of convent routine. But when five years—nearly six years—had passed, the tranquil triumph of Madame met with a violent check. Pierre de Forville was no more dead than Hortense herself; but he had received a pious and mournful letter from Madame, communicating to him her death and burial, and inquiring if a monument should be erected to her memory. He had come to the convent, been under the same roof with her who was heart-broken for his own supposed loss, seen her grave, and fled again to dissipate his grief, if he could, by travel more distant still from his native country. Six years after the profession of Sister Catherine, he had returned home, and discovered the fraud practised upon him, by the convincing proof that his cousin had inherited her share of her father's estate. He made his appearance at the convent gates, and demanded to see her whom he had confided to the motherly care of the Supérieure twelve years before.

Madame's false heart quaked within her. Here was a man who had been faithful for so many years, nine of which had been given to the memory of the dead : a man who would not forget, who would not be consoled, who saw no charms in any other woman. He was a troublesome visitor. It was useless to tell such a man any more lies. Yes ; his Hortense was living, but she was the spouse of Heaven : no longer Hortense, but Sister Catherine, separated from him for ever. He was not permitted to see her, even at the grille ; for the Supérieure had no wish that she should discover the falsehood. M. de Forville persisted in coming again and again to thunder at the convent doors, and made a scandal in the town. He could not be put down or silenced. He went to the Bishop, and when he could not, or would not, do anything for him, he wrote a pamphlet disclosing the whole case. For this he was prosecuted, and imprisoned for six months ; but upon regaining his liberty, he set to work more energetically than before, and appealing to the civil law, he demanded that the Mayor should see and interrogate his cousin. The Mayor paid an official visit to the convent, and saw Sister Catherine, but in the presence of the Supérieure. He informed the astonished nun of her cousin's continued existence, and in the same breath inquired of her if she had taken the vows of her own free will. Shocked and bewildered, she murmured a few inaudible words in reply, which Madame interpreted to the Mayor as an avowal of her free and unbiassed will in taking the veil ; and the interview ended. The civil law could do no more. If Hortense de Forville chose to be a nun, no one could interfere to prevent it.

I listened to this story with intense interest, and a profound admiration for Pierre. What a prince among men must he be who could maintain a constancy like this ! I wished that heaven had given me such a man. I looked at the pale and faded face before me, and tried to fancy what the girl of fifteen had been, with whom he had parted in the gray gloom of the convent walls. I asked her to describe him, and she gave me a girl's valentine-like description : fine eyes, black hair, moustache, and white hands, with rings upon them. He was her "beau cousin." It was all she could say.

"And do you love him ?" I asked.

A shiver ran through her frame, but her dim eyes flashed, and her pale cheeks flushed a little.

"Ah, yes ; I love him," she whispered ; "I fear I love him better than the angels or the blessed saints—better than the Sainte Vierge herself."

She uttered the last words in a tone of candid horror, as if forced to speak the worst.

"Of course you do !" I said, emphatically ; "and you have no more right to be a nun than I have. You are one by fraud, and not by choice."

"Yes," she answered, weeping; "and I wish I had said so to the Mayor; but I was all confused and bewildered."

"Oh, if I were you, I should never rest till Pierre knew that I loved him still, better than anything else. I think how sad he must be to find that you are grown indifferent to him!"

"But what can I do?" asked Sister Catherine.

That was the question. Something ought to be done, if it were only to assure the unhappy but faithful Pierre that his Hortense was not so senseless as to prefer a convent to himself; but how to do it was the difficulty. Nobody who has not tried it can have an idea of what it is to be perpetually under lock and key, and surrounded by spies. Our only chance was to write to M. de Forville, and direct the letter to his château, whence it would be sure to be forwarded to him; but how to get that letter to the post-office? I racked my brain with schemes, but it was not till near Easter that a moderately prudent one presented itself.

The convent garden was on the other side of the street, with a subterranean passage beneath, by which we reached it. It was full in sight of several houses, from the windows of which we were often watched. It was nothing more than a long, narrow patch of ground, with a straight walk all round it, and a little chapel in one corner, where the Perpetual Adoration of the Cross was maintained by our nuns. On the side beyond it, and nearer to the houses, was the priests' garden; but again beyond that was a garden belonging to a house which was generally let out in stages. A few days before Easter my ears were greeted by English laughter and English voices, coming to me over the intervening enclosure. I urged Sister Catherine to write her letter immediately; and I added to it a note to the effect that M. de Forville might send some one to the convent, under pretext of seeing me, with a message from my home; but I left it with him to contrive a way of conveying a letter to us. These letters ready, the old difficulty of getting them to my country-people still remained. It was impossible to enter into any communication with them from the garden, because of the Perpetual Adoration. I fell back upon an old accomplishment, which had slipped into disuse. I have three brothers, who took upon themselves my early education; and, amongst other boyish acquirements, had made me an adept at flinging missiles at a mark. My sole chance lay in casting my letters from my attic window into the garden of the English.

Take the trouble to think of my difficulties. My window was high, certainly, and gave me so much vantage; but before me lay the street, the nuns' garden, the priests' garden, and beyond that, the one my aim must reach. They were all narrow places, so that the distance was not absolutely great, but there was the terrible chance of missing my throw, and of our letters falling into either of the two nearer enclosures.

Every day I picked up stones stealthily in the garden, and every evening during vespers I practised flinging them from my window. The priests' melon-frames were broken, and a sister narrowly escaped being struck by a pebble ; but a watch was set for mischievous lads in the street, and no suspicion fell upon me. I resolved that as soon as I had thrown twelve stones, without missing, into the English garden, I would risk my precious packet to my skill. It was done at last. Twelve largish stones had descended into the right patch of ground ; and, with hands trembling with excitement, I wrapped my packet in a paper, upon which I had written, " One of your country-women implores you earnestly to post this letter." My hands trembled, I said. But that would never do. I am not ashamed to own that I covered my face with them, and prayed God to give me strength and steady nerves, to take a right aim ; and then standing perfectly still for a few seconds, to make sure that I trembled no longer, I whirled my weighted packet out of my hand.

The short time it takes for a stone to skim through the air seemed several minutes to me. I felt persuaded it would fall into the priests' garden, and all the dire consequences rose vividly before me. But I saw my missile just clear the farthest wall, and drop into its right place ; and I sat down on the floor, crying hysterically, partly from thankfulness, and partly from reaction. I felt certain all would be right now ; but I did not cry the less for that.

Well : about fifteen days after that, a message came to me that a friend was waiting to see me at the grille. My heart throbbed quickly as I went. Was it really one of my own people, weary to see my face, and unsatisfied by the formal and scanty letters I was compelled to write ? Or was it a confederate of M. de Forville ? Sister Catherine fainted dead away when she heard the message, and I left the school in commotion, though happily no connection was perceived between the cause and effect. I found the Supérieure in bland conversation with my visitor when I entered. It was a lady, a stranger, who explained to us that she had met Monsieur mon père, at Paris, and having mentioned that she should be passing through this town, he had asked her to do him the inestimable favour of seeing me with her own eyes, and assuring herself of my health and happiness. There could be no doubt of either, she added, with a polite compliment to Madame, and she had another commission to fulfil. Monsieur mon père had entrusted to her two Easter eggs—one for Madame and the other for me—and with a smile of the sweetest blandness she put both into the Supérieure's hands. They were small enamelled and painted boxes, of the shape and size of an egg. Madame's contained a bank-note for two hundred francs ; and mine simply a chocolate bon-bon. It was impossible to suspect anything, for I was not yet a suspected person.

The chocolate egg contained a most ardent letter from Pierre, im-

ploring Catherine to free herself from her yoke at the end of her next five years. I learned then, for the first time, that in France the convent vows are only legally binding for five years, and must be renewed at each expiration of that period. At the close of the next October Catherine would have been ten years a nun, and she might assert her right to be free. All my care and half my sympathy vanished, for nothing could be plainer or easier than the course lying before her.

But Sister Catherine was troubled with a tender, or, as I think, a weak conscience. To my great disgust, she positively wished to betray the whole to her confessor. I made her comprehend, with some trouble, that I should be forthwith turned out of the convent, and she would be left to fight her battle alone. She kept silence, but her conduct was so odd that suspicions were aroused, and she was placed under strict surveillance. I had no opportunity of conversing with her, and I was in great doubt of her strength of mind to effect her own deliverance. She suffered the pangs of martyrdom during those last few months, from the Supérieure, the confessor, and her own conscience. Each day I saw her grow paler and more wretched-looking, and the last trace of beauty left her wan face. Other doubts, respecting Pierre, began to haunt me.

October came, and my friend the vice-consul paid me his monthly visit. I told him and the Supérieure that I wished to leave the convent on the twenty-eighth. I saw her colour change, and her keen eyes fasten upon me, as if she would read to the bottom of my heart. It was the day upon which Sister Catherine would either renew her vows or demand her freedom; for though she should have made her profession at the Fête de St. Catherine, early in December, her precarious health at the time she took the veil had hurried on the ceremony. Madame had strong suspicions of both of us, and during the next fortnight poor Catherine led an awful life. We Protestants do not know what it is. Every threat possible, of this life and the life to come, were hurled against her; but, to my surprise, she remained firm. I only knew it, however, by the mute, sad language of her eyes, whenever they had a chance of meeting mine: they spoke of a constancy worthy of Pierre.

The morning came upon which I must quit the convent; and I had not been able to see or communicate with Catherine. Early in the day I was summoned to the Supérieure's presence, and she bade me farewell with the most chilling frigidity, telling me I must go at once. I begged to stay till nearer evening, but she answered sternly, "No." My box was already gone down to an hotel on the quay, so I had no excuse for lingering. I was turned out at the convent door, like a servant discharged for dishonesty, and I heard its strong lock turned between me and Catherine. I felt perfectly bewildered.

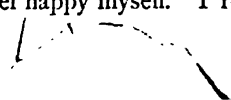
After awhile my common-sense, and my habit of managing for myself under perplexing circumstances, served me in good stead. I went to the vice-consul for the small residue of my money, but I told him

nothing, for I knew he would be afraid of meddling in such a matter. From his office I went to the hotel, where I arranged for leaving my luggage for a short time; first making up a bundle of clothes, which Catherine would want *if* she came out of the convent. Then I hired the sole conveyance I could procure, a sort of covered cart, with no door at the back, but a seat behind the driver, to which we had to climb over as well as we could. This *char-à-banc* I hired for the day, and bidding the driver go as far as the corner of the convent street, I told him to wait there; resolving to keep the convent doors in view until six o'clock, after which they never opened on any account.

It was one of the most wearisome and anxious days I ever passed. Even the polite French were curious, and showered questions upon the driver of the *char-à-banc*, to which his general reply was, "It is an Englishwoman," with a grimace more eloquent than words. There were two entrances to the convent—one for ordinary use, the other an arched, thick, black door, opened only on great occasions; as they were situated on different sides of the building, I was obliged to pace to and fro, to keep watch upon both. But at evening, near six o'clock, I saw the black door of ceremony opened narrowly, and a poor creature thrust out into the profane and unsheltered streets, as if against her will, for she made a faint gesture of seeking re-admission, and then cowered down against the closed portal, as if she was some poor dove flung out of her nest. I ran to her, for it was Sister Catherine!

With great trouble I lifted her, more dead than alive, into the back of my cart, and bade the driver take us to a village about seven miles distant, which I knew only as being the residence of one of our boarders, for I felt that it would be foolish and cruel to keep Sister Catherine in this town, where her story would ooze out in some way or another. I had posted a letter to Pierre in a letter-box near the convent, imploring him to come to us immediately at this village. I shall never forget that ride. The conveyance either had no springs or broken ones; and the seat in the back was so high, that only our toes could reach the floor. Added to this the roads were rough, and up and down hill, and the horse had an uneasy tread. Catherine, who had had no carriage exercise for sixteen years, was restored to her senses and distracted from her terrors by the unusual motion.

The *char-à-banc* conveyed us to the village auberge, and I took a room there for the night, which had already closed in. My nun was as helpless and frightened as a child, and obeyed me like one. As soon as we were fairly alone in our chamber, she fell upon her knees, and began telling her beads, or rather would have done so, had not her rosary been taken away from her, with her other insignia of sisterhood; upon the remembrance of which she fell into a profound swoon, and after recovering from it spent the rest of the night in speechless tears. I did not feel happy myself. I reflected that my friends did not know



where I was ; and I might fall ill and die, and be for ever lost to them. I was almost as frightened as Sister Catherine herself at this thought. But I did not fall ill. I fell asleep instead, and awoke refreshed, with more vigour for action and a renewal of sympathy for my nun, who had tried my patience a little the evening before.

The next day passed in altering one of my dresses to fit Catherine, and in reading over and over Pierre's ardent letter, which she had seen but once, as I had kept it for safety in my possession while we were in the convent. She grew more reconciled to herself, and was content to say her prayers without a rosary. Our room was very quiet, overlooking the orchard, where pyramids of apples were piled under the trees, and perfumed the autumn air with their scent. There was nothing to scare or startle her ; and to-morrow Pierre might come ! The day passed well ; but during the second afternoon the landlady made her appearance, and intimated that we must leave, with an air of decision which gave me clearly to understand that she meant to turn us out.

"Why?" I inquired.

She would not say why, only we must go, and go at once. It did not occur to me that I should have any trouble in finding another lodging, and I bade her leave us alone, while we prepared for our departure. Catherine's dress was finished, and I had bought her a dark-coloured hood at the village shop. She put them on, and appeared as a wan, meagre, worried woman, in poor circumstances, who had had all grace and dignity trodden out of her. Again, some very poignant doubts of M. de Forville's satisfaction crossed me, and I wished heartily that he would come, or that we were both back in the convent. Yet I was really fond of Catherine, and very sorry for her.

We went to nearly every house in that village, and were refused shelter in each ; but after I had caught a glimpse of the convent priest, I was no longer mystified. We must make the best of our way, while the daylight lasted, to some other village, and get a place of refuge for one night before we were hunted on again on the morrow. I said nothing to Catherine, but I took the broad road leading from the village, and shook off the dust from my feet as I left it. It was getting near the sunset, and all the afternoon the sky had been gathering stormy-looking clouds, torn at the edges, as if some strong upper current of wind was rending them into fringes. I talked to Catherine gaily, for at every utter extremity my spirits rise into almost boisterous buoyancy ; and I was brought up so close to the unknown future now that I could not guess where we should be, or what we might be doing, in another hour. On and on we walked briskly ; Catherine glad to fly from the inhospitable village, and I anxious to reach another before nightfall. The road was very solitary, with but few passengers, as most French country roads are, and for the first two or three miles I did not care to inquire where it would lead us, lest immediate persecution

should track our steps. We came to no village; and the few farmsteads we passed, while it was light enough to see them, looked too dirty and miserable to invite us to seek shelter there. We went on in hope of finding something better, until the dusk darkened rather quickly into night, from the thickness of the clouds which overspread the sky.

I did not know how far or how long we had walked, but I felt an extreme fatigue overtaking me. I could no longer see Catherine's face, nor had she spoken for some time, and I dared not ask her how she felt. The wind began to whirl past us in sudden gusts, and howl dismally among the trees which crowded the hedgerows and made our path darker. There was a vague, ominous roar, of a ghostly tone, somewhere in the black distance; whether of wind or sea I could not tell. We strayed somehow or other out of our road, and lost ourselves in a thick wood, which might prove to be one of those old forests of indefinite extent, where wolves find a lair, which still exist in France. Suddenly, without an instant's warning, a torrent of rain fell, pattering upon the autumn leaves with a multitudinous sound, and the sky grew blacker every minute, though we could still distinguish the ebony trunks and branches of the trees, enclosing us as in a net on every hand; and we could just make out, in a small hollow of an old trunk, a tiny white image of the Virgin in a bower of artificial white roses. Catherine sank down on the mass of dead leaves before it, and began to pray, while I stood by, listening to the howling of the fitful wind, and the deep, constant roar of the sea, if it was the sea, and shivering under the pelting rain-drops. There reached us at last the faint note of a bell tinkling far away.

"I am going to die," said Catherine, solemnly; "I hear the bell of the convent I have forsaken. It is the sign of approaching death. Oh, Holy Mary, holy St. Catherine, have pity upon us!"

"Don't be foolish," I said, rather crossly, "it cannot be the convent-bell."

"I have heard it for sixteen years," she answered, "and I should know it among a thousand. I am going to die in this dreadful place."

"But why should I hear it, if it is you who are going to die?" I asked. "Come, let us make another effort to find a way out of this wood."

Nerved by despair, Catherine dragged herself up, and I drew her arm within mine. We found a path which soon brought us to the end of the coppice and into a lane, along which we pressed eagerly. I was resolved to insist upon being received into the first house we came to, and before long a line of light, glimmering through some persiennes, shone upon us. I groped at the gate for a bell-handle, and rang such a peal upon it as the inmates had not heard for a long time. The window was quietly opened, but not the persiennes, and a voice from behind them said, in English, "Who is there?"

I never was so near fainting in my life. It seemed as if some angel from heaven was speaking a celestial language, and I had scarcely courage to answer. When I did, I do not know what I said, but there was a run downstairs, and a rapid unfastening of the door, and a hospitable rush to the gate. It was still raining heavily, but in a minute we were standing within doors, and two elderly English ladies were gazing, in unmitigated amazement, upon our bedraggled and miserable aspect. I glanced at Catherine's abject appearance, and feeling myself safe from the perils of the night, I burst into a fit of almost hysterical laughter, in which the two ladies soon joined.

They told us the next day that they had inhabited France during some years, dwelling in this little villa, just outside the town where our convent was. Catherine and I had returned by the very nearest route to the place from which we were flying, and it was indeed the convent-bell we had heard in the wood. We learned that our story was known, to the great mortification of the Supérieure, and was then the topic of the day in the little town. But as we did not wish to be seen, and the ladies were anxious not to embroil themselves with the priestly power, we remained secreted in their house for some time, after despatching a second letter to M. de Forville.

But just realize, if you can, my anxiety, when day after day passed by, and no faithful Pierre arrived! I began to be gravely troubled, for what could I do with a renegade nun on my hands? As the slow days of waiting consumed themselves, her conscience, like most consciences in time of distress, grew outrageously sensitive; and she tormented herself and me without ceasing. I thought of my father and mother, and wondered what they would think if I had to carry Sister Catherine back with me to our English home. I went as far as a cowardly wish that I had never meddled in the loves of Pierre and Hortense de Forville; and my brain grew almost fevered with wondering why he did not come.

But all's well that ends well. Pierre never received my first letter—posted in the letter-box near the convent—and our second, and a third, which we wrote in our impatience, were sent after him to Rome; and, hearing from us, he started off instantly to come. He had concluded that Catherine's profession had been made at the Fête of St. Catherine, in December, and he had intended to be down in the town then, waiting to receive her if she quitted the convent. But all was right now he had come.

I saw him first. He was no longer a "beau cousin," but a sunburnt, travel-worn man, nearing forty, whose hair was tinged with gray, and his forehead wrinkled, as much with trouble as with years. He looked like a rock against which many a rough billow and fretting wave had broken. But I liked him very much, and very gently I tried to prepare him for the change sixteen years had made in his cousin.

"She is always my Hortense !" said M. de Forville.

Hearing that, I led him at once to the room where she was waiting for him. But don't tell me that he did not feel a great shock when his eyes first fell upon her, for he turned to me with a look of almost agonized interrogation. We had done our best in making a becoming dress for her ; but still she looked a subdued, faded, gentle old maid, in the place of the bright girl of fifteen, half child and half coquette, whom he had last seen. The shock was not so great on her side ; though she trembled and hesitated, and greeted him with the graceful curtsey that Frenchwomen seem born to make. There was something very strange and sad in this meeting ; something of pathos which I had not thought of beforehand ; and I ran out of the room to hide my tears, leaving the lovers alone with one another.

I thought M. de Forville very quiet, and almost low-spirited, during the evening ; but Catherine every hour grew visibly younger before our eyes. "Iron sharpeneth iron ; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend," says the Bible. How much more, then, does a man sharpen the countenance of a woman ? It was droll to watch the convent frost thawing, and the innocent coquetries of the woman budding out—nay, bursting into full bloom—in Sister Catherine. Her eyes sparkled, a delicate colour suffused her face, and her voice took a gayer and more musical tone. At last she laughed—a sweet, ringing, girlish laugh, as free from care as a child's—and Pierre started as if his ear had caught some magical tone. This was a creature more like his lost Hortense ; that laugh had lived in his memory these sixteen years. He bent down his head, and laid his lips reverently and tenderly upon her hand.

We left the town the next day, and, to appease Catherine's troublesome conscience, we travelled direct to Rome, where M. de Forville had already done what money and influence could do to obtain for her the Holy Father's dispensation from her vows, which she declared to be essential to her happiness. The whole case was so plainly one of fraud, that the kindly old Pope absolved Sister Catherine without difficulty, and gave her, as a wedding gift, a rosary blessed by himself, in place of the one she had forfeited in the convent. We journeyed back to Paris, where they were married as privately as possible, to avoid causing any greater scandal than was inevitable. Since then, Madame de Forville has plunged into the gaieties of the gayest city in the world, and bids fair to become one of the leaders of fashion. There is but one hope for her. After I have been home to visit my friends, I am to return, to accompany them on a long foreign tour, which is M. de Forville's passion. Both of them declare that I am as dear to them as a sister.

My sole regret is that the Pope did not insist upon his beloved daughter, Madame la Supérieure, refunding Sister Catherine's dowry of seven thousand pounds.

PAST "SENSATIONALISTS."

A HISTORY of the Novelists of Great Britain has yet to be written. Biographically, we are more ignorant of this department of our literature than almost of any other. Poets, painters, sculptors, historians, men of science, have all found willing reciters of their lives; but the novelist seems generally neglected. It is not easy to conjecture the reason of this. It is not easy to understand why a great poet or a great painter deserves more particular attention from posterity than a great novelist. Yet, whilst Pope has been celebrated in the "Essay" by Warton, in the "Life" by Johnson, in the "Recollections" of Spence, in the "Miscellanies" of Curll, in innumerable works now forgotten or hardly remembered, Fielding has secured but one biographer, Thomas Roscoe—one biographer, at least, whose inefficient, though charmingly written memoir, is worthy the genius it proposes to celebrate. Now, what is true of Pope is true of most poets; but of the lives of a large number of authors, whose works of fiction still continue to delight, nothing at all is known. It is certain that what Johnson has done for the Poets yet remains to be done for the Novelists.

Nothing could be more interesting than a survey of Fiction from its commencement to the present time. By its commencement, need not of course be understood that period when the human mind first began to find amusement in the fancies of the poet, or the flight of less aspiring imaginations. Indeed, it can hardly be said to have commenced, until it had assumed the consolidation that only culture and the animating effects of reproductive force can impart to it. But assuming it to have commenced at any period we will, a survey of its progress from that period, opens up a train of speculations which the historian or the novelist would find equally valuable, whether applied to history or to ethics. The novelist has generally proved himself the social historian of his times. His works serve as comments upon the periods they depict; and in proportion as the narrative is coloured or influenced by the prejudice, forms, and habits of the contemporary age, so may it be said to become more valuable from the points of view from which the historian and the moralist would contemplate it. The noblest epitome of the social history of the age in which an author lived is contained in the works of Fielding. The caprice of the novelist, the exaggeration of the caricaturist, the contempt of the satirist may have distorted, dis-

coloured, or degraded the nature he made it his business to reproduce; but the strong element of truth that pervades the conceptions of Fielding—conceptions based upon those principles of human nature which render them recognizable in all times and by all nations—glows, as it were, through the occasional mask in which his fiction disguises him, and compels from all a confirmation of Byron's just eulogium, when he called him the "Prose Homer of Nature."

The influence exercised by Fielding upon his age passed away with the death of Smollett. The action, the colouring, the construction of the novel underwent a change; nor could the ultimate, though tardy, success of the "*Vicar of Wakefield*," a book which everybody admired, which everybody loved, but which nobody could imitate, arrest the tendency of the times towards a craving for a completely different species of composition. It is true that laborious simplicity was the dominant characteristic of the chief writers of that period. The "*Cecilia*" and "*Evelina*" of Madame d'Arblay, the "*Man of Feeling*" of Henry Mackenzie, the "*Zeluco*" of Dr. Moore; and others, though inspired sometimes with the true dramatic genius, and containing situations of considerable force and impressiveness, are based upon designs so simple and artless that, compared to them, the action of "*Clarissa Harlowe*" is almost melodramatic, and the plot of "*Rasselas*" almost complicate. But these writers exercised no influence at all upon their times. They procured readers and gained admirers; but the other caterers to the public taste, the lesser literary fry, who deposited their novels as flies deposit their ova, persisted in the artificial school partly suggested by the French, partly by their insensibility to decency, in which they met with a success far beyond their deserts. Horace Walpole, in his "*Castle of Otranto*," may be considered as the first of the school that was subsequently to fascinate and terrify the imaginations of English men and women. He may be also considered as the first who contrived to banish the somewhat pedantic artlessness of the Richardsonian school as well as the French fancies, and involved indecencies of a large and formidable tribe of scribblers. The "*Castle of Otranto*" gave birth to the "*Old English Baron*;" this was followed by "*Vathek*," "*Hugh Trevor*," "*The Monk*," and by Mrs. Radcliffe's novels. The demand for horrors of the blue-light kind having been created, there were not wanting many who eagerly volunteered supplies; but with the exception of those above named, adding only the names of Godwin, Mrs. Shelley, and the Rev. C. R. Maturin, we shall find none worth naming as approaching the singular merits which this ghastly school claimed as exclusively its own.

Of the mob of ghostly gentlemen who, fifty years ago, wrote with such ease, the most popular and the most terrific was Matthew Gregory Lewis. Not content with making the most fearful horrors the subject of his tale, he carried his ghastly imagination on to the stage, and in the

"Castle Spectre," "One o'Clock ; or, The Knight and the Wood-demon," and "Rugantio," helped to degrade the drama, to a condition compared to which we, who profess to deplore its present decline, are comparatively classic and lofty.

In a philosophic sense it is curious, and in an artistic sense highly satisfactory, to remark how completely the literature of the present day ✓ has eliminated from itself the melodramatic element which Lewis imported from the Germans, and which served to render him not only one of the most successful, but one of the most admired of the authors of his time. "The Monk," of all his compositions, is the only one remembered, and even this singular book bids fair to be forgotten as soon as the generation whose youth it amused has departed. This story was written abroad, and when published in England met with a success that few works since that time have experienced. Its supernatural, libidinous, and impious components, were of a nature so revolting that the author was menaced with a prosecution ; to avert which, he recalled the issued copies, and in a second edition declared he had recast the work. It was not, however, difficult to perceive that it would have been impossible to purge the book of its offensive elements, without utterly destroying the entire conception of the story. This Lewis did not choose to do ; the book was restored to the public with emendations of so trifling a character as to render, if possible, its design more prurient. Unless we except Mrs. Radcliffe, it would be hard to name any author who was more artistic in his treatment of the blue-lighted side of the supernatural than Lewis. His efforts after effect were of the most arduous nature ; but strained as they were by him, he succeeded in carrying them into a region into which neither the ludicrous, nor the pathetic, nor the humorous, entered ; which repelled most of the emotions which it is the business of all other art to provoke : a region in which the maniac might have seen his finest frenzies realized ; a region which yet wants a name, and which can only be called "Monk Lewis's Own." In a postscript to his melodrama of the "Castle Spectre," he declares that though blacks were unknown in England at the period of his action, yet the anachronism was purposely made in order to set off the scene ; and could he have produced a greater effect by making his heroine blue, *blue he would have made her !* Though one of the most unblushing plagiarists of his day, considerable merit must be allowed to Lewis for the art with which he contrived his effects by the incorporation of his own eccentric fancies with the eccentric fancies of others. The story of "The Monk" displays an adoption of the supernatural machinery, which most of the others of the same school only assumed in semblance. Mrs. Radcliffe, for instance, employs, to attain her effects, certain apparent supernatural agencies, which she subsequently falsifies. Lewis imagined that his readers were not to be put off with such lame and impotent conclusions. If he introduced the devil,

he took care that the devil should remain the devil, and nothing else but the devil, all through his tale. With him there was no telling you it was a mistake ; that it was the result of a heated imagination or the curious consequence of some fortuitous circumstance. His whole ambition was to pile agony. No captive was complete unless he ground his teeth or clanked his massy chain. No corpse could be legitimate unless worms had bored its eyes or forehead, or unless it was surrounded by coffins, each containing remains more loathsome than itself. The devil could not appear unless attended by subterranean murmurs, by the smell of sulphur, by the crash of thunder, and the play of lightning. In moments of terror it was impossible for Lewis's lights to burn any colour but blue ; in moments of thirst it was impossible for Lewis's goblins to drink out of anything but skulls.

One of Mat Lewis's most enthusiastic admirers, and his best imitator, was the Rev. Charles Maturin, author of "Melmoth," but better known as the author of the tragedy of "Bertram." Of all his works, none but "Bertram" is remembered ; yet we are assured that his novel called "The Fatal Revenge ; or, the Family of Montorio," met with a success which, if not so protracted, was at least during the time hardly inferior to that experienced by "The Monk." "Melmoth" is about the maddest work ever written by a man of real ability, and merits a place next to the "Bedlam Tragedy," in nineteen acts, of Nathaniel Lee. What must always surprise us, is how such stuff could ever find readers. Some of the details are of the most revolting kind. The hero enters into a familiar compact with the devil, which enables him to live a hundred and fifty years, during which time he goes through many adventures and performs many wonders. Owing probably to his connection with Satan, the hero is made to "gleam with demon-light !" Considering the ability of Maturin, it is strange that something really good did not result from his labours. In spite of the repelling and preposterous subjects, however, which he selected for his stories, the treatment yet displays here and there those incidental and fortuitous touches, which only genuine talent can achieve. Though the censures passed upon "Bertram" are often just, it must be admitted even by the most zealous foe of that school of writing, that it contains many striking passages, and, what is more, frequent bits of poetry.

With the labours of Maturin seem to have expired the last convulsive efforts of the Monk Lewis's school of romance. After this it was probably believed that the force of horror could not go further ; moreover, there were others in the field whose genius now began to operate powerfully upon the minds of the public. In July, 1814, had been published "Waverley," the first of a series of novels destined to effect a revolution in fiction such as the world has never before witnessed in any department of literature. The redeeming influence of the "Ariosto of

the North" was further assisted by the pure pen of Washington Irving, by the correct taste of Professor Wilson, by the witty effusions of Theodore Hook, and by the genial and elegant productions of the many celebrated names whose powers seem to have culminated in the works of Thackeray, Eliot, and Dickens.

✓ Long prior, however, to the appearance of Maturin and Matthew Lewis, our grandfathers had been thrilled and terrified by a series of romances which, though probably owing their birth to the suggestion of the "Castle of Otranto," yet claimed a merit which had never before been attempted, and which, allowing something to priority of conception, has never yet been excelled.

✓ Anne Radcliffe has been called the Salvator Rosa of British Novelists ; and if force of conception, a power of grouping together whatever is imposing, grand, or terrible, a nice discrimination in the adjustment of the parts of her involved stories, and a thorough knowledge of the effects to be evolved from particular distribution of colours, can support the judgment of her admirers, then it must be allowed that she is fairly entitled to the appellation. Her first novel was "The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne," which, unlike most of the earliest compositions of authors who afterwards become celebrated, evinced no promise of the marked success she was subsequently to achieve. Then followed "The Sicilian Romance." This book succeeded in attracting a tolerable amount of attention. Though written in the *black and white* style, and though displaying little subtlety of perception, the "Sicilian Romance" is full of fine descriptions of natural scenery and accounts
* of adventures, which, though mostly improbable, are forcibly and cleverly expressed. This work gained for Mrs. Radcliffe the flattering comment of Sir Walter Scott, that "Fielding, Richardson, Smollett, and even Walpole, though writing upon an imaginative subject, are decidedly prose authors. Mrs. Radcliffe has a title to be considered as the first poetess of romantic fiction ; that is, if actual rhyme shall not be deemed essential to poetry." "The Sicilian Romance" was followed by "The Romance of the Forest," "The Mysteries of Udolpho," "The Italian," and "Gaston de Blondville." Mrs. Radcliffe from the first had displayed great descriptive powers ; it was reserved for her later works to show that she united to this faculty the art of delineating passion as it had not often been delineated before. The character of
✓ *La Motte* may be ranked amongst the most admirable melodramatic portraitures in fiction. Nor do I employ the term "melodramatic" at all in a detracting sense. The various elements that interpenetrate her conceptions, indeed, of which her conceptions are composed, render her, as they render Shakespeare, Scott, Lytton, Hugo, intensely melodramatic. A wide survey of life invariably entails the melodramatic spirit. Life itself is a melodrama. The common-place yields to the romantic, the romantic to the ridiculous, the ridiculous to the sublime.

An ever-shifting scene of passion is being enacted before our eyes. The Romantic is only different from the Actual in its eclecticism ; in its proneness to enlarge the boundaries of observation ; in its willingness to subordinate the small to the great ; to render more emphatic by idealistic treatment the Grand in opposition to the Actualists, who strive to render emphatic the Common-place by fidelity in representation. Certainly the character of *La Motte* is a representation of a type of life that, like the professional highwayman, the Fleet parson, the bewigged beau, and the belted smuggler, has passed away, or assumed a different name and aspect. But there is the true dramatic flavour in the composition of the French villain. His character is melodramatized because his surroundings are melodramatized ; but it does not lessen the genius with which his character is conceived because Mrs. Radcliffe invested him with the impressive imagery of mountain, forest, and lake ; because she darkened the sky beneath which he stood ; because she associated him with the ruined castle, the murderous banditti, the moated grange, and the supernatural machinery of the romance sixty years ago.

The supernatural element in Mrs. Radcliffe's works is by no means of a vulgar kind. It is probable that, had she lived in our day, had she been subjected to the influence which these cultivated times exercise over the imagination, her supernatural conceptions, radically free from all grossness as they are, would have been yet further elevated, and have entitled her to the merit of being the poetess of the supernatural. Our contemporary tone of thought would have compelled her in the first place to subdue her love of effect ; it might not have exacted from her the employment of a different means, but it would have instructed her how to reconcile with greater subtlety the flights of fancy with the facts of life, and insisted upon the development of her tales by schemes of fiction which should appeal more to the imagination, because with them should be inwoven solutions to her enigmatic supernatural agencies of a more poetic, a more refined, and consequently of a more satisfactory nature. But as it is, her supernatural machinery is very different from that of Monk Lewis. With Mrs. Radcliffe the world of mystery is a subject of awe ; of terror that can find no expression. Dim shadows flit before our pathway, and vanish ; we know not whence they come, or whither they are going ; whether their presence is ominous or encouraging. With her, "millions of spiritual creatures throng the air ;" vague entities, whose presence thrills the imagination—no Rosicrucian machinery to inflate the story, but the subtle element of a vigorous fancy—a genius, giving to "airy nothings a local habitation and a name."

As the author of "St. Leon," William Godwin deserves a place amongst the melodramatists of the commencement of the present century. But pathetic and admirable as many of its descriptions fre-

quently are, "St. Leon" has completely vanished from our literature, and the only one of the author's works now read or remembered is "Caleb Williams." This novel may be classed amongst the most intensely personal stories in the language. Few authors have ever written so much out of themselves as Godwin has done in "Caleb Williams." It was composed at a period of his life when his views were so Utopian that, had they been advanced with less ability, they must infallibly have provoked the utmost ridicule—ridicule, in spite of the profoundly philanthropic spirit that underlay his philosophy. He was for having an Intellectual Republic; he desired to see all private interests sacrificed for the general good, forgetful that the general good depended upon the gratification of each private interest. In 1797 he married Mary Wolstonecraft, author of the "Vindication of the Rights of Women." Whether he included in his theory of public happiness the necessity of moral discipline, does not certainly appear from the circumstances attending his marriage. His profound contempt for that, of the existence of which all the world has long since seen the necessity, considerably surprised the imperturbable and reforming philosophers that surrounded him, and subjected him to their frequent though cautious admonitions, to which, however, he listened with indifference, pleading as an excuse his sincerity in all that he thought and did. Were this the philosophy of the law, there are, perhaps, few crimes that would not carry with them their own justification. Of this union a daughter, afterwards Mrs. Shelley, was the fruit, who by her own genius helped to protract the existence of the school to which her father belonged, by her tale of "Frankenstein." Upon the story of "Caleb Williams" Colman founded his bombastic melodrama, "The Iron Chest." The narrative is remarkable for its intense earnestness, for its frequent touches of pathos, in spite of the ornate and deep-mouthed diction. The master-incident in "Caleb Williams" has been justly pointed out by Sir Walter Scott as an instance of the author's coarseness and bad taste. It is certainly inconceivable that a man of a temperament so chivalrous as that attributed to Falkland, a man upright, courteous, gentlemanly, in every sense a benevolent and wise man, should have degraded himself into a cowardly assassin, when it was possible for him to avenge himself upon his rival in an honourable way. Godwin's object in writing this novel was obviously to convert fiction into a vehicle for the expression of particular opinions; moreover, he proposed that it should comprehend, as he himself expressed it, "A general review of the modes of domestic and unrecorded despotism, by which man becomes the destroyer of man." His design was satiric; but his imagination overflowed and drowned the gall with which he had anointed his pen. His "Cloudesley," "Fleetwood," "Life of Chaucer" (ridiculed by Scott), "Antonio," a tragedy, "Essay on Sepulchres," and "Mandeville," have perished—perished

with the startling philosophy that had Shelley as an admirer ; perished with the subverting sentiments and contemptuous theism of the author. But "Caleb Williams" survives him ; and if passages of beautiful composition, animated descriptions of life, exciting incidents admirably narrated, and one character—that of Falkland, which may be ranked amongst the finest delineations in English fiction—if such merits can help to protract the existence of a book, then "Caleb Williams" bids fair to be admired and read for a long time yet to come.

But it is well that the melodramatic age of fiction is gone ; and it is to be hoped that it will never be again revived. Not but that it is a most legitimate province of art, and one that needs great genius to illustrate it. But, unfortunately, melodrama is so intimately associated with whatever is vulgar, improbable, or foolish ; it is so impregnated with the odours of the stage, so resonant with the echoes of orchestral accompaniments, that authors avoid it on no other grounds than because they think it too degenerate to be worth redemption. [I must, of course, by the term melodrama, be understood to mean that species of fiction exemplified by the works of the authors considered in this article. Others there are who have approached their tasks instinct with the genuine spirit of melodrama, and who, so far from being losers by the fact, have further helped to dignify the department of literature which they have adopted. But, on comparing the works of these with the works of the Monk Lewis's school, the difference will at once be obvious. With the latter, it is not so much their supernatural machinery as their exaggerated views of life, that have earned for them the title of melodramatists. We have writers amongst us who are not a bit less melodramatic than those we speak of, who flourished fifty years ago ; only then the public taste permitted these authors a greater license, countenanced the presence of the devil, and enjoyed the vagaries of ghosts. We have changed all that. But our "sensationalists" still retain the *black and white* way of telling stories ; still copiously colour ; still freely exaggerate ; still travestie human nature by imposing upon human nature the operations of motives and the commission of actions which are improbable or gross. The reaction of fiction in England has been too great to suffer us to pursue the middle course, which is essentially the melodramatic. But, be this as it may, no one can deplore the complete elimination from our literature of that ghostly element which, fifty years ago, made most of our English authors "sensationalists" in the most extravagant degree.]

THE MILLER'S REVENGE.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

THERE are few places within an easy run of home at which a brief holiday may be more pleasantly and profitably spent than at Jersey. Both Guernsey and Sark are well worth visiting, but Jersey is pre-eminently the queen of the Channel Island group, both on account of its size and its many natural beauties. It may be "done" comfortably in a week, after the ordinary skimming fashion of modern tourists; but to learn to love it thoroughly one must reside on it for months, and see it in storm and sunshine, and in all the varying moods which it puts on, like a beautiful, changeful woman.

It was my fortune recently to spend part of my annual holiday on the island. It was not my first visit, and all the chief points of attraction were already familiar to me. On this occasion I determined to explore some of its hidden nooks on foot, and to familiarize myself with its more homely features, while striving to gather some idea of the modes of life and habits of thought of the scattered dwellers in its bays and valleys.

In one of my rambles I fell in with a gentleman, an artist by profession, who was engaged in painting one of the many romantic headlands which diversify the northern seaboard of the island. He had lived for several years at St. Helier's when a boy, and he seemed to know by heart every legend and romantic incident with which the history of the island, true and fabulous, is associated. It was from his lips that I heard the following story, which is here told as nearly as possible in his own words. We were lounging on a hill-side, cigar in mouth, watching the stealthy incoming of a summer tide, and the time was the lazy half-hour that usually follows an out-door luncheon.

"Rather a curious story" (began my painter friend) "attaches to that ruined water-mill, of which you made mention this morning as forming a likely subject for a pencil-sketch; and, as I know you have a slight craze on the subject of folk-lore and traditional tales, I don't mind telling you this one. Not, however, till you have tapped that black beard in the corner. Thanks. Now for our Once Upon a Time.

"The once upon a time, in this case, stands for several years less than a hundred. The exact number, however, is not known to deponent, and matters nothing to the story. At that time the Mill of La Roquette—such was the name by which it was known—was in good working order,

and did as flourishing a business as any mill on the island. The miller's name was Pierre Lebrun. He was a widower, and well advanced in years. He was assisted in his business by his nephew Gaspard, a young man of five-and-twenty, who had come over from Coutances, in Normandy, when quite a lad, and had grown up under his uncle's roof. After his wife's death, no woman was ever known to enter Lebrun's cottage. Inside the house and out, everything was done by the miller and his nephew. The two were well matched. Avarice, and that low cunning which delights in over-reaching a neighbour, and spending a shilling to gain a farthing by trickery, were their chief characteristics. To give them their due, they were hard-working men, and what they did was always done well and to the time, so that the huge wheel (for the mill was worked by water-power) was seldom idle for want of something to do. The mill, and the house in which the miller lived, were both under one roof, and together comprised only four rooms: two being used for business purposes; one as a living room—kitchen and parlour together; while in the loft over the latter the miller and his nephew slept. Behind the mill was a rough stable and outhouse, in which the miller kept a patriarchal horse, and a cart so old that it was popularly supposed to have been built during the reign of Lebrun's great grandfather, who had been the first miller of La Roquette.

"So one year went by after another without weaving any thread of variety into the woof of the dull, colourless life led by the two men at the mill, except that Lebrun's hair was gradually turning as white as his own flour, and that gloomy Gaspard was growing, if possible, more gloomy and taciturn than ever. They were both men of few words, and perhaps that was one reason why they agreed so well together.

"You know the situation of the mill, that it was built in a warm fold of the hills, in a little valley of its own, but still high enough above the sandy beach to afford its inmates a grand view seaward. In the foreground the most prominent object was yonder reef of treacherous rocks, against which, even in calmest weather, the fretting tide bursts in showers of spray. Not that Lebrun or his nephew cared one farthing for the view, or would have expressed the least regret if a high wall had been built up between them and it, and had shut out the prospect for ever.

"Pierre Lebrun was an early riser. On going into the mill soon after daybreak on a certain autumn morning, he was stupefied to find a sack of flour, which he could have sworn that he had tied up overnight, ready for sending home, now standing untied and open-mouthed, having evidently been disturbed by some one since the miller had last set eyes upon it. Lebrun's first glance was to the outer door, but the stout wooden bar with which it was always secured was still in its place. He himself had but just unbolted the door of communication between the mill and the house; and the one small window, by means of which the lower storey was dimly lighted, was set high up in the wall, and

barred with iron. As Lebrun's slow mind mastered these facts one by one, he burst into a cold sweat, and looked fearfully around. No ordinary human being could have got at the sack to untie it; ergo, it must have been untied by the agency of witchcraft. Such was the first thought that evolved itself out of the miller's mind. As he stood there, in the ghostly gray of the early morning, it did seem to him quite possible that some power more than human might be granted to those who had sold themselves to the Evil One, and that he was the victim of a malignant trick, which had its origin in some such compact.

"He took a step forward, and peered closely into the open sack, and then he started back in dismay. The sack had not merely been opened, but some portion of the contents had been stolen: a quantity of flour had been scooped out, probably by a handful at a time, the mark of four outspread fingers being still plainly visible on the surface of what was left. In an instant, the witchcraft theory was brushed like a cobweb from the miller's matter-of-fact brain. A thief, and a merely human thief, had been at work on his premises during the past night. His pocket was touched, and that was enough to rouse his worst passions.

"'Gaspard! Gaspard!' he called out, hoarsely, 'make haste hither.'

"There was something in the old man's voice that brought Gaspard at once, half-dressed as he was. 'Yes, my uncle, here I am,' he said.

"'Who has touched this sack?—hast thou? Who has taken of the contents?—hast thou?' demanded the old man, fiercely, as he pointed, with a quivering finger, to his violated property.

"'No, my uncle, certainly not I; that you know sufficiently well, without asking the question,' answered the astonished Gaspard. The two men spoke habitually in a patois of Norman-French, although neither of them was at a loss to express himself in English when the necessities of the case required that he should do so.

"'Who, then, has touched it?—and where is the thief?' asked Lebrun, as with glaring eyes he gripped his nephew by the wrist.

"Gaspard shook his head, and gazed helplessly around. If his uncle's superior wisdom was at fault in the matter, how was it likely that he, a comparative ignoramus, could throw any light upon it?

"Neither could Pierre Lebrun himself, as it turned out, throw any light upon the matter. The premises were thoroughly searched for some traces of the thief; but, for once, the miller's low cunning was completely at fault, and he went to bed that night a morose and baffled man. The one point of the case that puzzled both uncle and nephew was as to how the thief had obtained both ingress and egress, without in the least interfering with either window or doors. It was a point that drove sleep, except in brief, weary snatches, from the pillow of Pierre Lebrun. If it was possible thus to enter his mill without his cognizance of the mode by which such entry was effected, what portion of his

property could be considered safe from depredation? Evidently none. Even life itself was hardly secure under such circumstances.

"Next morning it was a great relief to find that nothing had been touched during the night. Several more mornings came and went, with a like result. It seemed as if the mysterious midnight visitor had satisfied himself, or herself, with one visit to the mill. Pierre Lebrun began to recover his spirits, and even ventured to joke grimly with his nephew about his loss; saying that it must have been the devil himself, and he alone, who had paid them a visit, being, doubtless, in want of a little flour for his next batch of loaves.

"A week or ten days had passed when, one morning, Gaspard heard himself called again. His uncle, with a face as white as his own flour, was standing, with straining eyes and fingers nervously intertwined.

"'Look! look! mon enfant!' he said, in low, hoarse accents. 'The Foul Fiend has been here again while we slept. If this goes on I shall be a ruined man.'

"As on the previous occasion, a sack of flour had been opened, and part of the contents abstracted. This time the thief had re-tied the mouth of the sack, but in such a clumsy fashion that the miller's sharp eyes had at once detected the imposition. As before, the thief had come and gone, in spite of the bolts and bars with which the mill had been secured over-night. The mystery was thickening, and Pierre Lebrun was nearly at his wits' end.

"He was an uneducated man, and consequently, to a certain extent, a superstitious man. He had a lurking faith in ghosts and witchcraft, but, for all that, the theory of supernatural agency, as connected with the loss of his flour, had no tangible resting-place in his mind. He was too practical—he had too much of that common sense which is so very common—to seriously harbour such an idea for long. No; the thief who had stolen his property was, without doubt, a common-place thief enough, quite amenable to imprisonment and hard labour if caught and convicted. But the maxim of Mrs. Glasse holds equally good with thieves as with hares: the first requisite is to catch them.

"But the hare that Pierre Lebrun longed to catch was evidently a very slippery animal; and the question—What sort of trap ought to be set?—was one that began to trouble the miller's mind to the almost entire exclusion of every other thought, and one which he could by no means decide to his own satisfaction. And so several days and nights passed quietly away without action of any kind being taken by the miller. Then, one morning, Gaspard was, for the third time, summoned by his uncle: for the third time Pierre Lebrun had been robbed of a small quantity of flour, and for the third time the thief had got clear away, without leaving anything behind by which he could be traced.

"The miller was furious. He stormed and raved about the mill, making use of anything but exemplary language. 'Look here, little one,'

he said at last to his nephew, 'one way or another, this sort of thing must be brought to an end. I will watch in the mill with my big pistol, and will either shoot the thief or catch him next time he comes. In one, two, three, four nights it will be time enough for me to begin my watch. Ha! ha! I will shoot Monsieur le Farceur. He shall amuse himself at my expense never again.'

"As Lebrun had decided, so he acted. On the fourth night after the third robbery he sent Gaspard to bed at his usual hour; and then, having fastened up the little establishment in the customary way, he ensconced himself behind a bundle of empty sacks in one corner of the mill, armed with a huge old horse-pistol, into which he had crammed a couple of bullets, and twice as much powder as was necessary, and which, should an occasion for using it arise, was rather more likely to explode than to go off properly. Lebrun had also with him a small dark-lantern.

"For three consecutive nights the miller watched and waited, with the fierce patience of an old fox, for the coming of his prey; and for three nights his waiting was in vain. On the fourth night, Lebrun was alone in the mill, Gaspard having gone to Rozel late in the afternoon with a load of flour, and with instructions to stay all night at Rozel, and return early next morning with a load of corn, which a customer had promised to have ready for him by that time.

"Gray, hook-nosed, cunning-eyed old Pierre, had been dozing lightly in his lair, when, towards two o'clock in the morning, he heard something that caused him to prick up his ears, and brought back his scattered senses with a shock. He took a firmer grasp of his pistol, saw that his dark-lantern was ready to his hand, and raised himself noiselessly on his knees. The noise which he heard proceeded from the outside of the building, and could be caused only by some one who had no business in that remote spot at such an uncanny hour. As already stated, the mill had but one window, or opening, which was rather high up in the wall, and had two upright iron bars running across its inner side, as a security against thieves, but had no other framework, and was left entirely unglazed. From Lebrun's hiding-place in the inner darkness of the mill, this window showed like a faint blue transparency against the bright starlight outside. The noise ceased, and presently, to his intense astonishment, Lebrun saw, first the head, next the shoulders, and then the body of some unknown person, apparently of the feminine gender, come into view, bit by bit, as it cautiously ascended—like a stage-ghost rising through a trap-door to slow music—till the whole body became visible, dimly outlined against the starlit sky, as it stepped noiselessly on to the window-sill. Lebrun did not require to be told by what means the ledge had been gained. Outside the mill, on two stout nails, hung a short ladder, of which he made use in many ways; but to-night had seen it put to a service for which its owner had

never intended it, and Lebrun simmered with rage as this fact made itself apparent to his dull wits.

"But his rage was largely mingled with surprise when he saw the figure, after poising itself for a little while in a listening attitude on the ledge, as if waiting to assure itself that all was quiet in the mill, begin to squeeze itself, inch by inch, through the narrow aperture between the bars. 'I wouldn't have believed that anything over a child of twelve could have made its way through that opening,' whispered Lebrun to himself. It was easy enough for the figure to get its head through the bars, but it seemed to stick at the shoulders for full two minutes, and Lebrun laughed a silent sardonic laugh, and nodded his head grimly, feeling certain that the thief was caught in a trap. But a little perseverance overcame the difficulty, as it had doubtless done on previous occasions. Then, a push, a wriggle, and a twist, and the intruder was inside the mill. Lebrun's shaggy brows came down over his darkling eyes at this, and he ground his teeth like a man in a fit.

"'What was the intruder—a child or a woman?' was the question that Lebrun now put to himself. If the latter, she must belong to a diminutive race: no woman of ordinary size could have squeezed herself through so narrow an aperture. But whether woman or child, there could no longer be any doubt as to her felonious intentions. As soon as she was fairly inside, she leaped lightly from the window sill on to a number of piled-up sacks of grain, and then slid to the ground. Stepping across the floor, almost as lightly as a cat could have done, and brushing close by Lebrun in his hiding-place, she made her way, like one to whom the place was familiar, to where some tied-up sacks of flour stood ready for delivery. What her after movements might be, Lebrun could only guess at. If he guessed that at that very moment his flour was being stolen, he would probably not be far from the truth.

"He was very impatient by this time, but he had not long to wait. In five minutes at the most from the time the figure brushed past him, it came gliding back again on its way to the window. He could just discern it by its being a shade blacker than the blackness that filled the inside of the mill. As it was in the act of passing him, he put out an iron hand and gripped it firmly by the shoulder.

A woman's shriek, loud and shrill, but over in a moment; a savage bite with sharp teeth that met in the fleshy part of his hand; a loud curse from the miller as his fingers let go their grip; and next moment, as it seemed, the creature he had been holding had scrambled back to the window, and was clinging to the bars like an infuriated tiger-cat. But there she was stopped. Before she had got more than one arm through, the flash of Lebrun's lantern smote her dazzled eyes, and his deep, harsh tones fell on her ear like the accents of doom.

"'Come down this instant, or I will blow out your brains!'

"Still clinging to the bars with both hands, she turned over one shoulder a white face, and eyes dazed and full of despair. She hesitated, and the same terrible threat, deeper and harsher than before, echoed through her brain; and there was something in the voice of the man who uttered it that told her it would not lack fulfilment. The bars seemed to be drawn out of her fingers, rather than her fingers to quit their hold of the bars; and, with a faint cry for mercy, she fell back, a shivering, frightened heap, on to the piled-up sacks."



MY LOVE.

They call thee false as thou art fair,
They call thee fair and free—
A creature pliant as the air
And changeful as the sea :

But I who gaze with other eyes—
Who stand and watch afar,
Behold thee pure as yonder skies
And steadfast as a star !

A star that shines with flickering spark,
Thou dost not wane away,
But shed'st adown the purple dark
The fulness of thy ray :

A rose whose odours freely part
At every zephyr's will,
Thou keep'st within thy folded heart
Its virgin sweetness still ! T.

THIS YEAR AT DIEPPE.

WE arrived in a diligence, and a cloud of dust. Declining the ordinary route, *via* Newhaven, for that of Folkestone, we left the crossing from thence an open question, until the state of the sea should be ascertained. It proved to be clear, blue, very calm, and we soon touched the shores of Boulogne, intending to proceed, as we had once done before, by train to St. Valéry-sur-Somme, and thence on to Dieppe by diligence.

"You can't do it," said the commissionaire, who was taking an interest in the boxes. Shock the first. "Not do it?" "No. You must go on to Abbeville, and take the diligence from thence; there's no longer a proper correspondence between Dieppe and St. Valéry."

Up to Abbeville we went by first train, and descended at the Hôtel de France, whence the diligence would start in the morning. It proved to be an omnibus with two horses, instead of a diligence with four; and it charged itself with the mail-bags to be delivered at the stations en route. We started after breakfast. C—— preferred a perch aloft with the driver, and I had the inside to myself. Some of the windows would not open, and some would not shut; the August sun was intensely hot; the white dust blew in, in clouds. What an object I should be at the mid-day halting-place!

At first the stoppages seemed incessant, what with the different commissions the driver had to execute, and which appeared to consist chiefly of talking, and the number of houses he chose to say "Bon jour" to on his own score, getting down to do it. During one of these interludes, C—— came round. "What do you think? Our names were sent up from Eu last night to the landlord of the Hôtel de France, telling him to keep two places for us in the diligence!" I thought the words were a joke, but he insisted. This driver—the present man now chattering close by at the open house-door, one leg inside, one out, one eye on his friends, the other on his poor, patient horses, lashing their tails in impotent warfare with the flies—had brought the paper himself from Eu. But the thing seemed an impossibility; no living being who knew us was aware we had even crossed the Channel. "You must have misunderstood what the man said; you are forgetting your French!" and he hurried back to his place, in a fit of laughter, at the words. Not understand the man!—he, born and bred in France! On we went gaily; the sun hotter, the dust greater.



DIEPPE. PLAGE AND CASINO.



Another stoppage, and C—— came round with the paper. True enough ! There was my name written on it in an unmistakable English hand, with a direction underneath : that two places should be kept for us in that morning's diligence. It was like a bit of magic ; no sleight-of-hand ever equalled it.

"It must be the spirits, you know !" said C——, having to dart round to his place again.

"I'll show you the gentlefolks that gave me the paper yesterday afternoon at Eu, sir," said the driver.

A little over three hours, and then the long descent into Eu commenced ; and the omnibus pulled up at its resting-place on the market-hill. Out came a landlady, out came a maid ; disappointed, no doubt, at seeing one solitary inside passenger, but politely evincing no surprise at the passenger's condition. I had started from Abbeville in black silk and crape ; I arrived at Eu a whitey-drab colour, looking like a column of spoilt flour. Madame whisked, and the maid whisked, and I whisked ; all to the admiration of the market-place. C—— went off with the driver to get the mystery of the paper explained. It was very simple—as most mysteries are when you obtain the clue to them. These people at Eu had expected some friends bearing the same name, but not ourselves.

Four hours we had to stay at Eu. There was the church to see, Madame informed us, and Louis Philippe's château, and Tréport, if we liked to go to it. We took the château first. It is very quiet and simple ; ridiculously small, when regarded as a residence for a reigning king and his family ; but I dare say the change to it, from the state and grandeur of the Tuileries, must have been felt as a delightful relief. A glance at the church next, and then a drive to Tréport, a little place presenting no particular seduction, and then back to Eu, to the table d'hôte dinner, which was a very poor one indeed, even for the style of inn. "Thirteen francs to pay," said the landlady, lumping it together. And dear enough, though it did include a bottle of ordinaire and two half-cups of coffee.

A diligence this time, and four horses. Of all the heaps of luggage ever piled on a diligence, I think that particular diligence had the most. It was pretty well laden when we started from Eu ; but at Tréport two ladies got inside, and their luggage alone would have filled a moderate wagon. The conducteur grumbled, the driver looked round, but the ladies could not appear at Dieppe without their costumes, so the boxes were hoisted up. The coupé had been unattainable, and we were full inside, eight persons. C—— had his place by the driver, and how many climbed up to the banquette I was afraid to look. Away we went, with the fresh smell of the sea on the left, and glimpses of it gleaming through the approaching twilight.

It was nearly dark, when sudden shouts assailed the diligence, and we were pulled up hastily. A stout woman, with a girl of four or

five in her arms, wanted to get inside. There ensued a pitched battle of tongues between the conducteur and some of the inside passengers, more particularly those from Tréport. The conducteur favoured the application: we could sit close, he said. The two ladies were against it: Were we not already full to crowding?—and hot?—and dusty?—and everything? “Keep you quiet, mesdames,” cried he to them; “I was not obliged to take you up at all, you know. This good lady requires to gain Dieppe.” The good lady spoke up for herself: “Pardon me, a thousand times, messieurs et dames? This little girl must be at Dieppe to-night, otherwise I would not think of incommoding you. Pray let me in!” And she came in; we “sitting close:” which we had been doing all along.

On again, in the night dust, with much noise between the driver and his horses; for we were behind time, and trains have not the habit of waiting for people. Dieppe was entered at last. Leaving part of our load at the station, the diligence floundered on over the stones, and drew up at its destination on the Quai Henri Quâtre. I ran into the hotel, to Madame's bureau, and there saw Madame comfortably nodding, after her bustling day, and somebody in spectacles beside her at the desk. Madame woke up with a start, and gazed at me with eyes that had no recognition in them. “I know I'm nothing but a mass of white dust—I know how much I am changed; but surely, Madame G——, you have not forgotten me?” “Eh, mon Dieu!” retorted Madame, “but what brings you in *that* mourning?” And I told her what. “I've not a chamber—I've not a single chamber to give you,” cried Madame, lifting her hands in perplexity. “Dieppe is crowded from gate to gate. Why did you not write? Madame D——, my clerk and amanuensis,” she continued, with native politeness, introducing the lady in spectacles, who never ceased to stare through them, with wide-open eyes, during the colloquy. Madame shrieked out for Rosalie, the head-chambermaid, who came forward, and knew me at once. “There's not a single room, is there?” asked Madame, in despair. “But yes, there was a très belle chambre vacant since the afternoon,” answered Rosalie. True, it was au quatrième; but perhaps Madame, the visitor, would kindly not mind that for a night or two. “But,” shrieked Madame (she could, perhaps, speak quietly if she tried; I never heard her do it), “there's also needed a chamber for the young Monsieur; he's still at the diligence, getting the luggage.” Well, equably returned Rosalie, there was a très bonne petite chambre de garçon in the roof: he should have a better one after Dimanche.

The chamber, as old Rosalie said, was very good when once you got to it; but it was no end of a climb. “You shall both be moved after Dimanche, madame,” she repeated; “I'll see to that.” “But, Rosalie, why after Dimanche?” came the natural question. “Does Madame not know that this is Friday night, and that after to-morrow

will be the races? The town is full already; numbers are arriving hourly; the hotels will be choked inside and out."

The town of Dieppe in itself is not inviting, as everybody knows. Two or three long, straggling streets—nothing to see in them worth seeing but the ivory shops, and a few short side-streets, with wide gutters running down their midst. It is ill-drained—I suppose not drained at all, in point of fact; and the smells that come up from the open trap-holes in hot weather, or before rain, are something to fly away from. But the Plage is beautiful. An extensive green plain, long and wide, intersected with paths and a few benches; the large expanse of sea stretching out before it, and the palace-like hotels, whose charges are said to be fabulous, making the background.

The Casino! Dieppe is nothing without the casino. It is the institution of the place—Dieppe proper. Visitors (taking them as a whole) live in the casino, so to say, and in it alone.

It was between three and four o'clock on the Saturday afternoon, that I made my *début* there—if the word may be allowed in such a sense. Going through the rooms to the open terrace beyond, into the midst of some English friends sitting there quietly, it seemed to me, in very truth, that I had suddenly passed into an unknown world, never before heard or dreamt of. I felt bewildered. I could do nothing but sit still and gaze. My kind friends talked to me in vain; I answered at random, unable to hear or to think, seeing nothing but the strange sight before me.

Take all the fashion-plates that have been issued during the last six or eight months, whether in Paris or London; cut out the figures and set them up on end before you, and I fearlessly and truthfully assert that you would not see fashions so outrageously grotesque as those that were passing before my eyes at the *Etablissement* of Dieppe, at this, the daily promenade. To attempt to describe them would be for me futile; a court milliner could not do it. They were new to the world: of a style that had not been worn in our days. Short robes with two skirts, the under one in vandykes, the upper one of marvellous cuts and angles, that the eye could not understand in a day's gaze. Long robes *à queue*, very ugly; or with sweeping trains, very elegant. Satin petticoats trailing the gravel, embroidered white muslin skirts flowing over them. Some of the *toilettes* were beautiful, some hideous: a few were white, others comprised all the colours of the rainbow.

Look at *Mademoiselle* there! She is twenty-seven, if she's a day, and she is dressed *en bébé*. A pretty white muslin frock, with a little flounce; a short-waisted full bodice, in gathers; simple sleeves, tied up; no crinoline, a white satin sash tied behind, and low black shoes, with large bows: all exactly as we should dress a baby. It makes *Mademoiselle* look fifteen, at the most; and the little hat, perched on the fore part of the head, resting on the nose, partially hides the face,

and keeps up the delusion. See Mademoiselle's cousin, a young lady of twenty or so. A young lady? Up go the eye-glasses, for it looks like a harlequin coming along. A short costume of indescribable shape—neither a gown, nor a coat, nor a cloak, nor a frock; something composed of loops, and ends, and fullings, and pockets, and tails; the colours black, and blue, and white, and yellow, and red; bronze boots, coming half way up the leg, tassels at the calves, heels three inches high, not placed where heels should be, but nearly in the middle of the foot; a jaunty little sailor's hat, on the eyebrows as usual, with red streamers behind, and a little red animal on the brim in front. And so Mademoiselle sails along, for the admiring benefit of all beholders. Who is this, in blue and silver? An elegant woman, in a delicate blue-silk train and jacket, garnished with silver; small silver flowers in her hair, by way of bonnet; and a parasol that looks like a blue-and-silver butterfly. There goes one, all brown, from hat to boots—that peculiar shade we are taught to call Bismarck malade. Following her is a costume of white and black. Behind comes a demure little figure in grey, who has been pleased to discard crinoline entirely; she consequently gets more than her share of gazing, and is in all probability English. Is it a school-girl of fourteen, in short frocks yet? No, it is a woman who has been married these ten years, and has girls at school herself. As a rule, the grande monde did not come to the casino in the same dress twice running. The bébé of to-day would be the grande dame on the morrow; the Bismarck malade of to-morrow would the next day be brilliant as a bird of paradise. Fashion with the French is a necessity—an institution of their country, as was said of the casino at Dieppe. Not so with us. But we catch the malady a little when we are over there. The costumes varied with the days of the week. Sunday, Madame la Comtesse would be (say) radiant in scarlet and gold; Monday, charming in mauve and silver; Tuesday, sombre, or Bismarck malade; Wednesday, flaunting it à la harlequin; Thursday, delicate in white silk, lace, and pearls; Friday, grotesque in orange and purple; Saturday, en bébé, with a fan and a lace handkerchief. Vary, you, the costumes and colours as imagination shall dictate—you cannot picture any that were not seen on that terrace. Peacocks' feathers reigned; little birds, with outstretched wings, hovered on the tip of the hat; shining brown beetles were natural as life.

The life at Dieppe is this. At the casino in the morning, simply attired (or in-doors, as the case may be), watching the bathers, reading the journals, and gossiping. Home to mid-day breakfast, and to change the dress. Casino at two or three o'clock again, in all the glory of fashionable costume. Some sit there watching the sea and listening to the band; ladies are in groups, working; many of us never did any earthly thing but gaze our admiration away at the promenaders. Home to dinner at six, the hour for the tables d'hôte;

rushing to the casino again by eight, and watching the dancing, in-doors now.

Punch was wrong. *Punch's* correspondent assumed that he could go to those rooms, and dance with any lady he might see there. This is a mistake. When the copy reached Dieppe, it created quite a commotion; fifteen matrons, at the least, said they should write to *Punch*, and set him right. There is *the* society at Dieppe, as there is elsewhere, composed of the best French and English families sojourning there, people all well known to each other, and to the world; and the young ladies of it dance but with their own set. Were a stranger to come up and ask them, the answer would be a civil refusal. Some are not allowed to dance there at all, and consider their mammas very models of hard-heartedness—grievously particular.

The evenings there were, to some of us, intolerably stupid—to me, for one, and I scarcely ever went; but the afternoons on the terrace had a certain attraction. We sat there in the shade, under the arcade, in indolent comfort, a small knot of us, French and English, working or not, as might be, the tide coming in at our feet, that moving panorama of figures and colours passing and re-passing before our eyes, ever changing, as if it were a living kaleidoscope. "Look there!" sharply greeted our ears one day, and, of course, up went all heads in a moment. A lady was pacing the terrace in the most ravishing white ball-dress (as to material) you ever saw. But the body (if it could be called one) left off where other people's mostly begin, and there were no sleeves whatever, unless a strap of inch-wide white silk, carried up over the shoulder, could be called such. Over this was a covering of white tulle, thin and slight: only those whose sight was very clear could see it at all. Perhaps she thought she looked well—that the gazes and glasses directed to her were those of approval and admiration. Perhaps she found out how it really was, and understood the angry hum that went round. "Can the *French* like that style?" crossed my mind. "She ought to be requested to leave the casino," exclaimed, even as I thought it, my dear old French friend of many years, who was seated next me. "I'd rather go abroad in my night-gown," heartily cried my English neighbour on the other side. Who she was or what she was, nobody professed to know, but we never saw her again. Perhaps (poor thing!) she only wanted to invent a new sensation—a very difficult matter to achieve amid those ever-changing costumes.

It must not be understood that these extravagant dresses (in every sense of the term) were worn by all. Nothing of the sort. Or I don't know what those would have done, whether French or English, who had taken three or four gowns, at most—gentlewomen, for all that, with their pedigrees at their back. Very content indeed, were they, to sit and look on; but it grew a little wearisome at last. One can be sated, even with sweets.

"You have said nothing of the style of hair," cries the young-lady reader, anxious upon that score. Well, no; so much has been said about the hair of late years, that there's little left to say. Some wore chignons the size of a large melon; some wore none. Some had curls—and very pretty ones—hanging from the head behind; others had the hair disposed of in some astonishing manner flat to the head, and interspersed with chains of jet or of pearls, the little hat invariably perched on the fore-part of the head and resting on the nose. And I think that's enough of the fashions.

M. Marbeau was there—a great French philanthropist—a man whose benevolent goodness may be read in his countenance, and of genuinely simple manners. He had overworked himself, and gone to Dieppe for a rest. Somebody else had done the same. It was M. Marbeau who instituted the Société des Crèches—an institution where poor women who go out to work may leave their infants by day, from fifteen days old to three years. There is one at Dieppe. He took me and Mrs. M——G—— to see it; but I have not space to tell about it here.

This, however, is hardly getting on; and the casino, to us who go not in for fashion and costumes, does not imply everything.

To begin at the beginning again. The races took place on the Sunday afternoon, as Rosalie had told us they would; and, by the emptiness of the streets, the world and his wife no doubt went to them. Full to the brim were the hotels when they were over, and Madame, at ours, was nearly off her head. The races had gone off delightfully, said the dinner-table, putting out of sight a trifling accident or two: a horse hurt for life, and his rider's collar-bone broken. *One* gentleman's name was incidentally mentioned as having been present on the course—Mr. Ball Hughes. Three or four days subsequent to that—I think it was on the Thursday—that gentleman rode forth in the morning full of health and life. Within half-an-hour he was brought back on a stretcher. The horse had shied, bolted against a gate, and fallen on his master. "Oh, the injury is not serious," said the town, "though he appears in great pain, and his cries are great." His two little children, sent out of the house to keep it quiet, and brought to the casino by friends, were playing on the terrace, unconscious of the ill in store for them. "He is going on favourably," was the report for two days; "He is getting well;" and it was thought he was. But, all suddenly, one forenoon, the death-bell of the Roman Catholic church boomed out: and it was for Mr. Ball Hughes.

From death to life—from sadness to gaiety—it is but the way of the world. There shot up one day the Turkish flag (or something that did duty for it) at the Hôtel Imperial, and it became known to all Dieppe that his Excellency Djemil Pasha, the Turkish Ambassador at the Court of the Tuileries, had arrived from Paris on a short sojourn. In itself, this might have affected few of us; but he was generous enough to

announce his intention of giving a ball, and the world went mad to go to it.

A charming ball it was. The best of the French and of the English society were invited—a few, rather than many. Some of the toilettes were magnificent. The Imperial Hotel was lighted outside with coloured lamps, the rooms were spacious, the refreshments good, and the pleasantest of all present was the Ambassador himself—a handsome man, looking very like a quiet, well-bred Englishman. When I went up, on leaving, to wish him the very good evening, and to thank him for the good soirée we had had, he took my hands in his, and said it was he who ought to thank me for my kindness in coming. He left for Paris the following day, and the Crescent and the Cross waved no more over the Hôtel Imperial.

Some mornings subsequently a sad event happened. A yacht came into port with the dawn, and one of the sailors, a young man of two-and-twenty, met with a terrible injury. It occurred just opposite the hotel. Auguste, the head waiter, informed us he had seen it. On pressing him for details, it turned out that he had seen the confusion it caused, and heard the noise, which was near enough for him. Fifty reports had already sprung up, three parts of them asserting that the man had fallen from the mast-head; but the Vice-Consul gave me the true version. He had come ashore to fasten a rope to one of the posts, and in stepping backwards, unaware that the edge was so near, fell over. He lay on the deck, underneath an awning, poor fellow, quite insensible, the doctors round him, and the English clergyman. We could see him as he lay, and you may be sure the sight attracted people to it. The chief injury lay in the head, and it was feared he would never awake from the state of coma. At first the report went running that the yacht was Mr. Milner Gibson's, which was expected in; but it proved to be Sir Neville Chamberlain's. About two o'clock that day, as we came out of the hospital, which some of us had been to look over, we met the stretcher that was bearing him to it. There was no change in him: quiet and still he lay. There was no other change until the next morning (Saturday), and then the change was death. On Sunday, during service, we were disturbed by a vast deal of knocking outside the church-door. Everybody appeared to wonder what it was. We saw, when we came out: they had been nailing the black cloth over the doors for the reception of the funeral.

The days and the weeks went on. Putting aside the casino, and the friends you meet there, Dieppe, as a watering-place, is but monotonous. The Château d'Arques you get to know by heart; Puy you cannot be always walking to; Nieuville is far, and dull; the oyster-beds, once seen, afford no novelty; and what else is there? The pleasantest thing to do there is to sit on the Plage, and watch the wide sheet of sea, with its ever-varying colours. You must put up with the fleas, though. They

drove some of us nearly wild. One day, at the casino, I ventured a slight question on the delicate subject—wondering what might be the experience of other people—and showed my wrists. Out came a dozen hands, and as many answers—"Mine are worse than yours: look at them!"—"You should see my arms!"—"You should see my neck!"—"You should see all over me!" They come from the sand, it is said. The worst things are the gnats; some call them mosquitos. I got frightened over one bite I had; but the inflammation went down at last. Lady M—— told me she was laid up with one the last time she was at Dieppe; obliged to call in a medical man. These bites sometimes prove highly dangerous, imparting a sort of poison. I remember hearing, when staying some years ago at Grenoble, of a death that ensued.

On coming down stairs one morning at the end of September, the hotel was in a state of commotion. The chef was in the yard with his four kitchen aides-de-camp, the waiters were out there, the chambermaids were out, Madame was out, and Madame D——, the amanuensis. This did not tell much, for they were all in the habit of coming out on the slightest possible occasion, or on no occasion at all. It was something now, however. Madame Lefébre, the money-changer at the next door, had been robbed of every coin she possessed—twenty-two thousand francs. It was done in this way.

Her husband had come down stairs that morning a little before six, bringing as usual the cash-box with him. The business and money, be it known, are Madame's; Monsieur being, as regards that, a sort of nonentity—no uncommon thing in France. He opened the inner shop-door, communicating with the house, and deposited the box on the counter, the shop being still closed to the street, and in darkness, save for the light that came in through a hole in the shutters. He then went to the door of the alley, and opened that. A gentleman was passing with a rapid step. "Can you tell me where the steamer lies?" he asked of Monsieur Lefébre, in a vast hurry. "Close by, sir; a little way down the port," replied M. Lefébre, assuming, as a matter of course, that the question referred to the English boat, then about to depart for New-haven. "Where?—where?" cried the man, all in excitement, as if afraid to lose it; "I can't see it; I shall be too late." M. Lefébre obligingly stepped off the pavement to show him—for, by partly crossing the road, the steamer could be seen. There the man kept him another minute or so, asking questions, before he went on his way. He spoke French well, but with a slightly foreign accent. M. Lefébre finished the opening of his house, and then missed the cash-box. During that one minute of road-crossing, a confederate must have entered by the alley-door, and taken it.

The gens d'armes were aroused; the telegraph offices were flown to. But the men of arms wasted time in needless queries and conjectures, and the wires could not be got at until nine o'clock. Gradually the

(supposed) plot revealed itself, little by little—one fact looming slowly out after another.

About a fortnight previously, two men, apparently gentlemen, arrived at a small hotel on the port, a dozen doors or so from Madame Lefèvre's. The landlord assumed that they had come over by the New-haven boat, but had no proof of it. They stayed at Dieppe some days, and then went up to Paris to see the Exhibition. The supposition is, that they had a third man with them, lodging elsewhere, and that this one remained at Dieppe, making himself acquainted with the habits of the Lefèvres. Down they came from Paris, the two, having seen the Exhibition, which they did not forget to talk of to the landlord. At night they paid their bill, saying they were going away the next morning. One of them, as it appeared, went to the Hôtel de Commerce, on the market-place, and hired a carriage, to be in readiness at six o'clock in the morning, to take him to St. Aubin, the first station on the line of rails. The carriage was in readiness accordingly, and at six, or thereabouts, the hirer made his appearance with two friends, all of whom were driven off. This was only a few minutes after the robbery was effected. On the road they called to the driver, and directed him to drive them to Longueville, instead of St. Aubin, which is the second station on the line. As they went along, the driver met a friend with a return carriage, and pulled up. "Tell my master," said he, "that I shall not be home so soon as I thought, for these gentlemen want to go to Longueville."

On they sped again. The driver says he saw them changing their coats in the carriage; they seemed to take off some inner coats, and put them over their others; but the man's suspicions were not excited, and he had not heard of the robbery. At Longueville they stopped at an inn, paid the man for the carriage, gave him a handsome gratuity for himself, and told him to wait, and be in readiness to take them back to Dieppe at six in the evening. They ordered dinner at the inn, and walked away. Nothing more was seen of them. The dinner waited, and the coach waited; but the gentlemen forgot both. The supposition arrived at was, that they were the clever thieves. Of course, there is no positive proof of it; but one cannot help seeing the probability. Nothing more was heard of the money; nothing, most likely, ever will be heard of it.

"I have been saving and saving for twenty years, and now it's all gone!" said poor Madame Lefèvre to me. "Twenty-two thousand francs! it is all we had in the world. At any other time, the loss might not have been half so great, but the close of the month had brought in outstanding accounts. Perhaps the thieves knew this."

Some good people in the town came forward and lent her a little money, to keep her exchange open: and there the matter rests.

But October has come in—bringing weather that will frighten us all

away. Blowing gales, falling rain—bitter, bitter cold. Few of us had brought winter clothing, and were glad to go about in old guys of travelling-cloaks. Everybody caught cold, everybody was shivering. The reign of fantastic costumes was over. The terrace could only be looked at through the windows, creaking with the blast; the rooms were like a banquet-hall deserted. Those bound for Paris went away in shoals; those for England waited on, for the sea appeared to be impassable. On the evening of the 3rd, there was a great storm of thunder and lightning. "We shall have it warmer now," said the shivers; but Friday came in colder than before. The lightning had set fire to the church at Auffay, and for hours Dieppe could not be telegraphed to for help, for the storm affected the wires. A great deal of damage was done. "Houses and fields are still burning!" cried Dieppe, on Friday; but when the regiment of pompiers, in their brass helmets, marched back to Dieppe about two in the afternoon, we knew that all danger was over.

The wind was dreadful. On the Saturday and Sunday some grand matches at kite-flying were to have been held on the Plage, but the wind tore the kites before they could be got up. Monday was a worse day than all. The rain poured down, the cold was intense, the sea something frightful to behold. The boat started for Newhaven at three in the afternoon, and had an awful passage. That night, a poor douanier, on duty near the hotel, was blown off into the port and drowned. He was but eighteen, and had joined the service only eight days before.

Tuesday, more departures: only about twenty of us, visitors, were left in all Dieppe. The casino was to be kept open until the 15th, unless the gales brought it down beforehand, which they really seemed to threaten. The remnant of the band played to us still in the afternoons—inside now—as we sat there, shivering, and discussing the best mode of getting away. Wednesday we were reduced to ten; and Madame went into a fit of lamentation when I told her I should leave in the morning. We went to the deserted rooms for the last time; they looked a contrast to the gay and crowded scene but a week or two before!—and the sea was as wild as ever.

I had regrets at leaving, too; and Madame says she shall count the days until we go again. That's nonsense. But we were as free in the hotel as though it had been our own home; all things were liberal, pleasant, simple, and comfortable.

On Thursday morning we left—the whole household, from Madame downwards, getting up to see us off. Taking the diligence at a quarter-past six to Abbeville, and thence on by rail to Boulogne, to dine and sleep. It was rough there, also: people had been waiting ten days to cross. But the next day was calm and fine; and glad enough were we to see the white cliffs of old England.

And so, adieu to you, Dieppe! To another year.

OUR LOG-BOOK.

IN a fiction of last century, which scarcely deserves the obscurity into which it has fallen, the heroine is represented as receiving important tidings from one of those airy puppets who then flounced and fluttered with such elaborate graces everywhere in good society. The messenger's tongue far outran the lady's love of witty comment, and his overlaid conceits at last exhausted her well-trained patience. "Oh, I prithee tell me what thou sawest, and perplex me not with fine words," she cried; "give me the marrow of thy story in simplicity, as beseems its sombre matter, for men's opinions I vow will be the death of me." And the lady was doubtless right, though she wore patches, and dashed the powder out of her wig when anything chanced to displease her. Opinions have often a high value; but we detract nothing from the weight we set on our own when we say that in these few pages we shall keep them in reserve as far as it is compatible with our design. We wish to tell what we have seen—to indicate the track on which we have voyaged, rather than to formally detail the incidents as they occurred: in other words, our aim is not systematic criticizing of individual authors. Our criticisms shall be subordinate to our purpose of directing our readers to pleasant, healthy, elevating literature. Unconsciously, we may thus, perhaps, help to form some tastes, by simply leading the way and pointing out the beauties that lie on either hand. What is intolerable or injurious we shall pass by.

Amid the varying impressions produced by the reading of many books, it is often hard to fix on a starting-point in giving one's conclusive estimate of them. In our case this has been all the more difficult that our arrangement may, in a rough way, be taken to indicate the comparative importance we attach to the works we have had under notice. But we have for a moment or two kept before our mind the nebulous "world unrealized" of our past month's reading, and more and more clearly the longer we gaze one star emerges from the mass, grows in magnitude, and asserts its own sphere. This is "Mabel's Progress"—a novel characterized by fine clear readings of character, excellent grouping, and, on the whole, well sustained plot-interest. In this latter particular, however, we should say the author has experienced most difficulty; there being unmistakeable traces of self-consciousness, and frequent wavering between two paths. But there is a nimble, healthy nature behind all the conventionalities which occasionally hamper her, and she moves along steadily, exciting here to innocent laughter, and there, again, to tears, which are perhaps a little too much

strained through the sugary filter of sentiment. We can hardly say that this author has realized all the expectations raised by the "Tale of Aunt Margaret's Troubles;" but it is certainly a great deal that she has not positively fallen below its standard. There we had a deal of that quaint quietness and force which seem to come of very colourlessness in some of the old masters' etchings. A little of this charm our author loses when she sets to work on the broader canvas. Her genius is fine and decided in its movement; but it bites in with single exquisite touches, rather than electrically illumines by broad and commanding strokes. As she makes one of her characters say of another, we may say of her—"If she won't turn heads, she'll creep into hearts; won't she, my dear?"

It is not easy to give an idea of "Mabel's Progress," but this is not so much because of its being intricate, as because it moves over many different scenes continuously, and often without due softening and shading of the one into the other. Mabel Earnshaw, the heroine, is introduced to us alongside her mother and a step-father, in the town of Hammerham. During her mother's widowhood, the girl has lived a good deal with an uncle and aunt, who are actors; and the memory of their goodness, and their way of life, exercises in many ways a deep influence on her "Progress." There is a family of Charlewoods—people who have risen rapidly in the world by the father's speculations—and they are fond of Mabel. One day she is out for a drive with some of them, when a little girl is run over, and hurt. Mabel Earnshaw and Clement Charlewood feel they must look after her. She forms a very peculiar bond between them—this strange child, Corda Trescott—and is most skilfully used in this way, though, in the last scenes especially, she reminds us too closely of Little Nell. Mr. Saxelby, a hard, stern religionist, dies rather unexpectedly, leaving Mabel, little "Dooley" (Julian), and their soft, impressionable mother but scantily provided for, though the latter receives from him a legacy of stubborn prejudices, all characterless though she is. Mabel must go out as a governess, which she finds so uncongenial, that she bethinks her of her kind Uncle John and his wife, and resolves to seek their help to get a fair trial on the stage. Mrs. Saxelby, on learning this from her daughter (without any clear notion of Clement Charlewood's passion for Mabel), asks him to try and dissuade her from this rash step. Clement, who has been brought up with narrow ideas, which excluded play-actors from the range of respectability, accordingly goes down to the house where Mabel is, and reasons the matter with her. He concludes by making a declaration of his love. Mabel, in her pride and independence of character, is hurt by the idea of being thus lifted out of her lowly sphere into one where she might be "looked down upon" by his friends, and declines his suit. She hears favourably from her uncle and aunt, and, though she offends the Charlewoods, the Rev. Decimus Fluke, and the Misses Fluke, she firmly follows her resolution. She rises step by step, and at last takes London itself by storm, in

Juliet. Her theatrical life leads her to form strange acquaintances with both poor and rich, and these are wrought together in the interest of the story with skill. There are Jerry Shaw, and old Trescott, and young Trescott, the "snaky-eyed"—the vagabond of the story, a musical genius without the power of patience to perfect his gift, who, out of sheer selfishness and an old grudge to Clement Charlewood, seeks to secure Mabel's affections most unsuccessfully. And then there are Walter Charlewood, a brother of Clement's, a young officer; and Lady Popham, an eccentric worshipper of genius, often genius-bitten, too; and Miss O'Brien, her ladyship's god-daughter—a sturdy, honest, Irish girl, whose visit to the Charlewoods had led to the rumour—which, of course, reached Mabel—that Clement Charlewood was affianced to her, and this casts a strange shadow over Mabel, not inimical to the reproduction of Shakespere's love-lorn maiden. But the Charlewoods met with reverses and were reduced to poverty, the father hurrying on his end by laudanum in the midst of the crisis. Clement sacrifices all to honour, and is in London, working as a builder's clerk, when Mabel and he (who had all along faithfully stood to each other's love) are brought together, first at the sick-bed of Mrs. Charlewood, and then at the death-bed of Corda Trescott. Of course, it is needless to say that all ends well. There is much exquisite work in the book—much genuine insight into the world's ways, quickened and sustained by a true perception of life's manifold mysteries. Perhaps readers who think a little, and go into details affecting truth of delineation, will say that Mr. Saxelby, the Flukes, and that class, are exaggerations—caricatures of what had been much more lovingly, and therefore more sincerely, presented to us before in good old Stock. And if we might venture a word of criticism, we would dissuade the author from this form of caricature, which Mr. Dickens began, and which is now out-worn, threatening to have most disastrous and divisive effects upon our fiction—both prose and poetry.

Turning from "Mabel's Progress" to "Guild Court" is not so complete a transition as might at first sight be supposed. "Guild Court," though hardly so good a specimen of Mr. MacDonald's fiction as "Alec Forbes," has this advantage for English readers, that it is wholly free from the Scotch dialect he so delights in. It is thoroughly, and from first to last, a London story. What we meant in hinting that there *were* points of resemblance between it and "Mabel's Progress" was this, that both are disfigured by voluntary caricature of certain forms of religious conception, rather than of religious belief. But, in Mr. MacDonald's work, this exercises a more injurious influence than in the other, because he has a more direct religious lesson to convey, and works the thread of his caricature more directly into the web of his story. The whole lesson of the book is that, even on a nature with a vast amount of good in it, the narrowing influence of the strict Evangelical training that would piteously run all characters into one mould, may simply

squeeze the sap of religious instinct out of the human being altogether. And of course, in order to bring this out the more powerfully, one or two of the characters are somewhat harshly and unjustly treated, in spite of the author's incessant apologies for them. But, notwithstanding, there is in "Guild Court" a great deal that is attractive in story; there are some original, well-defined characters, as well as striking situations; and there is the backbone of a good plot. Besides, there is what is never wanting about Mr. MacDonald's writings, a peculiar atmosphere, charged with low musical warblings, and so bright with magical sunshine that hard-work-a-day people might well be tempted to exclaim against the very wealth, and soft, tender beauty of the garment in which our common world is everywhere wrapt. There is a certain cloudy, dazzling brilliance, which rifle-shots know very well, in which, if things are seen at all, it is with soft irregular haziness, that disturbs and confuses weak visions, and is only mastered by the very strongest; so is it with the artistic medium through which Mr. MacDonald seeks to show us our real world. And in order the better to keep the hard points of individual character from sharply piercing through this ideal or lyrical veil, he has recourse to creatures of a wholly abnormal type—crosses between elves and stage-children—who whirl and flicker round the hard points in his realer characters, as the soft evening shadows and the light of sunset soften the rocks. Kately and the tailor are undoubtedly so acted on by Mattie and Poppie, whether the author intended it or not. Mr. MacDonald hardly gets close enough to real life, does not look with sufficiently calm and steady eye on it, to discover the infinite order of elements that lie in the meagrest reality; and therefore, he must de-ornithize, if we may be allowed the expression, and then humanize a poor "Widdles," even though he should, by so doing, run the risk of being called cruel. Widdles is about as real a bird as Mattie and Poppie are real children; and is produced out of as indirect and unreal a suggestion. Under Mr. MacDonald's hands, however, they become fair figures—symbols of elements very powerful in his nature, to seize which clearly is necessary to any right understanding of him and his writings. "Guild Court" is very unequal, and there has been a deal of patient labour spent on points which only clog and injure the story; and yet we may draw from it good hope that Mr. MacDonald has made a great advance in his art. He is beginning to look on the outward world faithfully, and for a man of his genius the next step is to represent things as they really are.

The great point of interest in "Guild Court" turns upon a legal technicality respecting a will, on which, we believe, an important case recently turned; and this is so well managed, that much may well be looked for from Mr. MacDonald in this direction hereafter. Thomas Worboise, the hero, is a City clerk, with expectations. He is weak of will and irresolute, although he means well. His mother was a narrow-

mind, religious woman, who put tracts and pious books in his hand, and talked of hell and its horrors while her son was deep in Byron, and wholly unprepared for her lectures. He plays with the feelings of Mary Boxall, while he seeks to secure the love of her poorer cousin, Lucy Boxall—a truly sweet and noble girl. But Mary Boxall soon guesses at her admirer's character, and falling in bad health, the whole family leave for Australia for her sake. Just about this time, Tom Worboise, having yielded to temptation and the inducements of bad company, abstracts some money, and has to flee. Going down the Thames in a boat, he sees a child fall overboard, rescues it, and is carried insensible to a public-house on the side of the river. This act of unselfish instinct is the turning point in his miserable life. He works as a sailor, but, haunted by Lucy's love and by remorse, is irresistibly drawn back to the neighbourhood of Guild Court to see her once more if possible. He is laid hold of by hands not wholly unfriendly, and led into the presence of the Rev. Mr. Fuller, who informs him of the Boxall family having been shipwrecked, and of his father, whose name had been put into Mr. Boxall's will as residuary legatee, having succeeded to every bit of the property, to the complete exclusion of Lucy Boxall, and her good, but somewhat wrong-headed, old grandmother. Mr. Fuller gives Tom wise advice and well-directed aid; and though the young man does not get fully reconciled with his father, yet all is well and harmoniously settled.

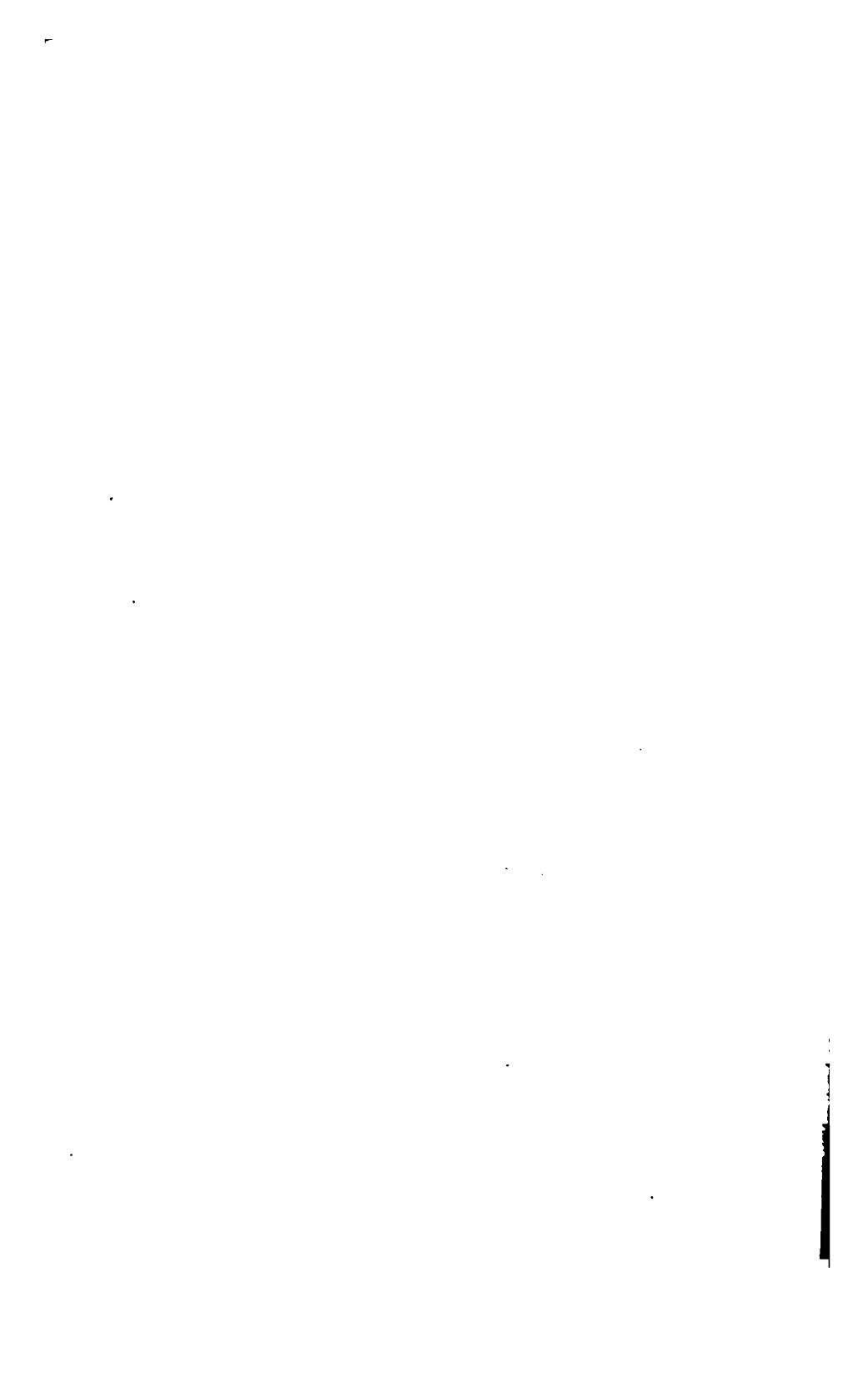
Dr. Macleod's "Starling" resembles Mr. MacDonald's "Guild Court," inasmuch as there is, of course, a bird in it. But all likeness ends here; the two works being otherwise as unlike as they well could be. The genial Doctor contents himself with rubbing-in a few faithful portraits of classes he knows well, and he connects them together by most simple and heart-touching bonds of affection. This effort of his is most interesting, and it is valuable both as a study of Scottish character and as an attempt to show the futility and the danger of setting up the mere conventionalisms of the intellect over the eternal instincts, those "primal sympathies," which cannot pass while men remain.

In "The Tenants of Malory," Mr. Le Fanu has wrought a partially old vein well. The work abounds in fine picturesque writing; the interest is well sustained, and the chief characters are powerfully drawn. Romantic Margaret Fanshawe, the Rev. Isaac Dixie—so easy-going and self-indulgent—and the two lawyers, are touched off cleverly. There is a little unnatural straining here and there, as in Anne Shackleton and Mrs. Mervin; but the current of interest flows on steadily. Mr. Le Fanu has the faculty of mixing many elements in such proportion as gives due relation and fitting place to all. We have the old point of a difficulty respecting proof of the death of an heir in direct line, some smattering of the religious element, a secret marriage, and a narrow escape from a double one; and yet all is made to "look amaisht as gude as new." There

is neither very hurried shock nor total pause. The light of Mr. Le Fanu's creative genius seems to burn pretty much through shaded glasses. Indeed, he seems to speak so much through a conventional mask, and is often so stilted, that we lose the full effect of what he says. He delights in stating a common-place in the form of a question, and trying at once to excite interest and anticipate the main turns of his story. Sometimes, too, he mars a powerful turn by a tendency to force little and almost unnatural points—as, for instance, when he represents the nephew as mistaking the message from the uncle about his marriage. But Mr. Le Fanu is always pleasant, airy, and enjoyable.

"£500 Reward" exhibits great talent of a kind—a sort of mental lock-picking—which is exceedingly ingenious. The writer of it has large knowledge of the world. Yet he seems to have, so far, used it doubtfully, when he put on his title-page "By a Barrister," since one of the great lessons of "£500 Reward" is that everybody should make a will, and have it done by a professional man in proper form. Our Barrister writes in a ~~most~~ lively and attractive style; he never lets the interest flag; and he has a humour peculiar to himself. He dashes along, regardless—we had almost written, of expense—that is, of the reader's time; for there is a want of form, in the higher sense, here. The Barrister may easily write a better novel than this, if he will devote more time to a study of human nature, and less to legal points and quirks, regarding all that sort of thing as the mere bones, which it is not sufficient to articulate into a body, but must be infused with flesh and blood.

Writing in view of Christmas, we may, perhaps, shortly mention some Christmas Books. There is, first, "North Coast Poems," by Robert Buchanan—a beautiful drawing-room volume, on which much care and pains have been spent, and with good result. Here and there we regret to see that the artists have followed and exaggerated a hard and wholly false realism into which Mr. Buchanan has recently fallen headlong, and which the men of the pencil might well have studied to relieve. One specimen of the hard and ungrateful work we may indicate—the illustration to the "Scottish Eclogue," which, perhaps, faithfully enough reflects the artist's conception, but which overcomes one with a feeling of disgust. Here the ideal medium, through which alone any form of life can be seen truly, has escaped the poet's clasp, leaving only the rough garment behind it; and the artist has followed suit, with due result—a repulsive picture. But a few of the poems are fine, and, generally, the illustrations are equal to them—the landscapes and sea-pieces being exceedingly beautiful. Messrs. Bell and Daldy have issued "Masterpieces of Art,"—one of the most beautiful books we ever saw, well arranged, exquisitely got up, and bringing together such an array of presentments of world-gems as is not to be found elsewhere.





OUT IN THE WOOD.

THE ARGOSY.

JANUARY 1, 1868.

ANNE HEREFORD

BY THE AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE."

CHAPTER III.

GOING OUT IN THE FOG.

HELP had arrived from another quarter. A knot of labourers on the estate, going home from work, happened to choose the road through the wood, and Mr. Edwin Barley heard them.

One of them, a young man they called Duff, was at the house almost as soon as I. He came into the hall, and saw me clinging to Jemima. Nothing could have stopped my threatened fit of hysterics so effectually as an interruption. Duff told his tale. The young heir had been shot in the wood, he said. "Shot dead!"

"The young heir!" cried Jemima, with a cry. She was at no loss to understand who was meant: it was what Philip King had been mostly styled since his brother's death. Charlotte Delves came forward as Duff was speaking. Duff took off his felt hat, in deference to her, and explained.

She turned as white as a sheet—white as George Heneage had looked—and sat down on a chair. Duff had not mentioned George Heneage's name, only Mr. Edwin Barley's: perhaps she thought it was the latter who had shot him.

"It must have been an accident, Duff. They are so careless with their guns!"

"No, ma'am, it was murder! Leastways, that's what they are saying."

"He cannot be dead."

"He's as dead as a door-nail!" affirmed Duff, with decision. "I can't be mistaken in a dead man. I've seen enough of 'em, father being the grave-digger. They are bringing him on, ma'am, now."

Even as Duff spoke, sounds of the approach stole on the air from the distance—the measured tread of feet that bear a burden. It came nearer and nearer; and Philip King, or what was left of him, was laid on the large table in the hall. As is the case in some country houses, the hall was furnished like a plain room. Duff, making ready, had pushed the table close to the window, between the wall and the entrance-door, shutting me into a corner. I sank down on the matting, not daring to move.

“Light the lamp,” said Mr. Edwin Barley.

The news had spread; the servants crowded in; some of the women began to shriek. It became one indescribable scene of confusion, exclamations, and alarm. Mr. Edwin Barley turned round, in anger.

“Clear out, all of you!” he said, roughly. “What do you mean by making this uproar? You men can stay in the barn: you may be wanted,” he added, to the out-door labourers.

They crowded out at the hall-door; the servants disappeared through the opposite one. Mr. Edwin Barley was one who brooked no delay in being obeyed. Miss Delves remained, and she drew near.

“How did it happen?” she asked, in a low voice, that did not sound much like hers.

“Get me some brandy, and a tea-spoon!” was Mr. Edwin Barley’s rejoinder. “He is certainly dead, as I believe; but we must try restoratives, for all that. Make haste; bring it in a wine-glass.”

She ran into the dining-room, and in the same moment Mrs. Edwin Barley came lightly down the stairs. She had on her dinner-dress, black silk trimmed with crape, but no ornaments, and her lovely light hair was hanging down. The noise, as it appeared, had disturbed her in the midst of dressing.

“What is all this disturbance?” she began, as she tripped across the hall, and it was the first intimation Mr. Edwin Barley had of her presence. He might have arrested her, had there been time; but she was bending over the table too soon. Believing, as she said afterwards, that it was a load of game lying there, it must have been a great shock; the grey-and-brown woollen plaid they had flung over him, from the neck downwards, looking not unlike the colour of partridge feathers in the dim light. There was no gas in the house; oil was burnt in the hall and passages—wax-candles in the sitting-rooms.

“It is Philip King!” she cried, with a sort of shriek. “What is the matter? What is amiss with him?”

“Don’t you see what it is?” returned Mr. Edwin Barley, who was all this while chafing the poor cold hands. “He has been shot in the chest; marked out in the wood, and shot down like a dog.”

A cry of dread—of fear—broke from her. She began to tremble violently. “How was it done, Edwin? Who did it?”

“You!”

"I" came from her ashy lips. "Are you going mad, Edwin Barley?"

"Selina, this is as surely the result of your work, as if you had actually drawn the trigger. I hope you are satisfied with it!"

"How can you be so cruel?" she asked, her bosom heaving, her breath bursting from her in gasps.

He had spoken to her in a low, calm tone—not an angry one. It changed to sorrow now.

"I thought harm would come of it; I have thought so these two days; not, however, such harm as this. You have been urging that fellow a little too much against this defenceless ward and relative of mine, Selina; but I could not have supposed he would carry it on to murder. Philip King would have died quite soon enough without that: he was following Reginald with galloping strides."

Charlotte Delves returned with a tea-spoon and the brandy in a wine-glass. As is sure to be the case in an emergency, there had been an unavoidable delay. The spirit-stand was not in its place, and for a minute or two she had been unable to find it. Mr. Edwin Barley took a teaspoonful out of it. His wife drew away.

"Was it an accident, or—or—done deliberately?" inquired Charlotte Delves, as she stood there, holding the glass.

"It was deliberate murder!"

"Duff said so. But who did it?"

"It is of no use, Charlotte," was all the reply Mr. Barley made, as he gave her back the teaspoon. "He is quite dead!"

Hasty footsteps were heard running along the avenue, and up the steps to the door. They proved to be those of Mr. Lowe, the surgeon from Hallam.

"I was walking over to Smith's to dinner, Mr. Edwin Barley, and met one of your labourers coming for me," he exclaimed, in a loud tone, as he entered. "He said some accident had happened to young King."

"Accident enough," said Mr. Edwin Barley. "Here he lies."

For a few moments nothing more was said. Mr. Lowe was stooping over the table.

"I was trying to give him some brandy when you came in."

"He'll never take brandy or anything else again," was the reply of Mr. Lowe. "He is dead."

"As I feared. Was as sure of it, in fact, as a non-professional man can well be. I believe that he died in the wood, a minute after the shot struck him."

"How did it happen?" asked the surgeon. "These young fellows are so careless!"

"I'll tell you all I know," said Mr. Barley. "We had been out shooting—he, I, and Heneage, with the two keepers. He and Heneage were not upon good terms; they were sour with each other as could be; had

been cross and crabbed all day. Coming home, Heneage dropped us ; whether to go forward, or to lag behind, I am unable to say. After that, we met Smith—as he can tell you, if you are going to his house. He stopped me about that right-of-common business, and began discussing what would be our better mode of proceeding against the fellows. Philip King, whom it did not interest, said he should go on, and Smith and I sat down on the bench outside the beershop, and called for a pint of cider. Half-an-hour we may have sat there, and then I started for home through the wood, which cuts off the corner——”

“Philip King having gone forward, did you say?” interrupted the surgeon.

“Yes. I was nearly through the wood, when I heard a slight movement near me, and then a gun was fired. A terrible scream—the scream of a man, Lowe—succeeded in an opposite direction. I pushed through the trees, and saw Philip King. He had leaped up with the shot, and was then falling to the ground. I went to his succour, and asked who had done it. ‘George Heneage,’ was his answer. He had seen him raise his gun, take aim, and fire upon him.”

Crouching down there on the matting, trembling though I was, an impulse prompted me to interrupt : to say that Mr. Edwin Barley’s words went beyond the truth. All that Philip King had said was, that he saw George Heneage, saw him stand there. But fear was more powerful than impulse, and I remained silent. How could I dare contradict Mr. Edwin Barley?

“It must have been an accident,” said Mr. Lowe. “Heneage must have aimed at a bird.”

“There’s no doubt that it was deliberate murder!” replied Mr. Barley. “My ward affirmed it to me with his dying lips. They were his own words. I expressed a doubt, as you are doing. ‘It was Heneage,’ he said ; ‘I tell it you with my dying lips.’ A bad man !—a villain !” Mr. Barley emphatically added. “Another day or two, and I should have kicked him out of my house ; I waited but a decent pretext.”

“If he is that, why did you have him in it?” asked the surgeon.

“Because it is but recently that my eyes have been opened to him. This poor fellow,” pointing to the dead, “was the one to lift their scales in the first instance. Pity the other is not the one to be lying here !”

Sounds of hysterical emotion were heard on the stairs : they came from Mrs. Edwin Barley. It appeared that she had been sitting on the lowest step all this while, her face bent on her knees, and must have heard what passed. Mr. Barley, as if wishing to offer an apology, said she had just looked on Philip King’s face, and it had frightened her.

Mr. Lowe wished to persuade her to retire from the scene, but she would not, and there she sat on, growing calm by degrees. The surgeon measured something in a teaspoon into a wine-glass, filled it up

with cold water, and made her drink it. He then took his leave, saying that he would call again in the course of the evening. Not a minute had he been gone, when Mr. Martin burst into the hall.

"What is this report?" he cried, in agitation. "People are saying that Philip King is killed."

"They might have said murdered," said Mr. Edwin Barley. "Heneage shot him in the wood."

"Heneage!"

"Heneage. Took aim, and fired at him, and killed him. There never was a case of more deliberate murder."

That Mr. Edwin Barley was actuated by intense animus as he said this, the tone proved.

"Poor fellow!" said the clergyman, gently, as he leaned over him and touched his face. "I have seen for some days they were not cordial. What ill-blood could have been between them?"

"Heneage had better explain that, when he makes his defence," said Mr. Edwin Barley, grimly.

"It is but a night or two ago that we were speculating on his health, upon his taking a profession; we might have spared ourselves the pains, poor lad. I asked you who was his heir-at-law, little thinking another would so soon inherit."

Mr. Edwin Barley made no reply.

"Why—good heavens!—is that Mrs. Barley sitting there?" he inquired, in a low tone, as his eyes fell on the distant stairs.

"She won't move away. These things do terrify women. Don't notice her, Martin: she will be better left to herself."

"Upon my word, this is a startling and sudden blow," resumed the clergyman, again recurring to the death. "But you must surely be mistaken in calling it murder."

"There's no mistake about it: it was wilful murder. I am as sure of it as though I had seen the aim taken," persisted Mr. Barley. "And I will pursue him to the death."

"Have you secured him? If it really is murder, he must answer for it. Where is he?"

Mr. Barley spoke an ugly word. It was a positive fact—account for it, anyone that can—that until that moment he had never given a thought to the securing of George Heneage. "What a fool I have been!" he exclaimed, "what an idiot! He has had time to escape."

"He cannot have escaped far."

"Stay here, will you, Martin. I'll send the labourers after him; he may be hiding in the wood until the night's darker."

Mr. Edwin Barley hastened from the hall, and the clergyman bent over the table again. I had my face turned to him, and was scarcely conscious, until it had passed, of something dark that glided from the back of the hall, and followed Mr. Barley out. With him gone, to

whom I had taken so unaccountable a dislike and dread, it was my favourable moment for escape ; I seemed to fear him more than poor Philip King on the table. But nervous terror held possession of me still, and in moving I cried out in spite of myself. The clergyman looked round.

"I declare it is little Miss Hereford !" he said, very kindly, as he took my hand. "What brought you there, my dear ?"

I sobbed out the explanation. That I had been pushed into the corner by the table, and was afraid to move. "Don't tell, sir, please ! Mr. Barley might be angry with me. Don't tell him I was there."

"He would not be angry at a little girl's very natural fears," answered Mr. Martin, stroking my hair. "But I will not tell him. Will you stay by your aunt, Mrs. Edwin Barley ?"

"Yes, please, sir."

"But where is Mrs. Barley ?" he resumed, as he led me towards the stairs.

"I was wondering, too," interposed Charlotte Delves, who stood at the dining-room door. "A minute ago she was still sitting there. I turned into the room for a moment, and when I came back she was gone."

"She must have gone up-stairs, Miss Delves."

"I suppose she has, Mr. Martin," was Miss Delves's reply. But a thought came over me that it must have been Mrs. Edwin Barley who had glided out at the hall-door.

And, in point of fact, it was. She was sought for up stairs, and could not be found ; she was sought for down stairs, all in vain. Whither had she gone ? On what errand was she bent ? One of those raw, damp fogs, prevalent in the autumn months, had come on, making the air wet, as if with rain, and she had no out-door things on, no bonnet, and her black silk dinner-dress had a low body and short sleeves. Was she with her husband, searching the wood for George Heneage ?

The dark oak-door that shut out the passage leading to the domains of the servants was pushed open, and Jemima's head appeared at it. I ran and laid hold of her.

"Oh, Jemima, let me stay by you !"

"Hark !" she whispered, putting her arm round me. "There are horses galloping up to the house."

Two police-officers, mounted. They gave their horses in charge to one of the men-servants, and came into the hall, the scabbards of their swords clanking against the steps.

"I don't like the look of them," whispered Jemima. "Let us go away."

She took me to the kitchen. Sarah and the cook were in it ; the latter a tall, stout woman, with a rosy colour and black eyes. Her chief concern seemed to be for the dinner.

"Look here," she exclaimed to Jemima, as she stood over her sauce-pans, "everything's a-spiling. Who's to know whether they'll have it served in one hour or in two?"

"I should think they wouldn't have it served at all," returned Jemima. "That sight in the hall's enough dinner for them to-day, one would suppose. The police are come now."

"Ah, it is bad, I know," said the cook. "And the going to look at it took everything else out of my head, worse luck to me! I forgot my soles were on the fire, and when I got back they were burnt to the pan. I've had to skin 'em now, and put 'em into wine sauce. Who's this coming in?"

It was Miss Delves. The cook appealed to her about the dinner.

"It won't be eatable, ma'am, if it's kept much longer. Some of the dishes is half cold, and some's dried up to a scratchin'."

"There's no help for it, cook; you must manage it in the best way you can," was Miss Delves's reply. "It is a dreadful thing to have happened, but I suppose dinner must be served all the same for the master and Mrs. Edwin Barley."

"Miss Delves, is it true what they are saying—that it was Mr. Heneage who did it?" inquired Sarah.

"Suppose you trouble yourself with your own affairs, and let alone what does not concern you," was Miss Delves's reprimand.

She left the kitchen. Jemima made a motion of contempt after her, and gave the door a bang.

"She'll put in *her* word against Mr. Heneage, I know; for she didn't like him. But I am confident it was never he that did it—unless his gun went off accidental."

For full an hour by the clock we stayed in the kitchen, uninterrupted, the cook reducing herself to a state of despair over the uncalled-for dinner. The men-servants had been sent out, some to one place, some to another. The cook served us some coffee and bread-and-butter, but I don't think any one of us touched the latter. I thought by that time my aunt must surely have come in, and asked Jemima to take me up stairs to her. A policeman was in the hall as we passed across the back of it, and Charlotte Delves and Mr. Martin were sitting in the dining-room, the door open. Mrs. Edwin Barley was nowhere to be found, and we went back to the kitchen. I began to cry; a dreadful fear came upon me that she might have gone away for ever, and left me to the companionship of Mr. Edwin Barley.

"Come and sit down here, child," said the cook, in a motherly way, as she placed a low stool near the fire. "It's enough to frighten her, poor little stranger, to have this happen, just as she comes into the house."

"I say, though, where can the mistress be?" Jemima said to her, in a low tone, as I drew the stool into the shade and sat down, leaning my head against the wall.

Presently Miss Delves's bell rang. The servants said they always knew her ring—it came with a jerk. *Jemima* went to answer it. It was for some hot water, which she took up. Somebody was going to have brandy-and-water, she said; perhaps *Mr. Martin*—she did not know. Her master was in the hall then, and *Mr. Barley*, of the Oaks, was with him.

"Who's *Mr. Barley* of the Oaks, *Jemima*?" I asked.

"He is master's elder brother, miss. He lives at the Oaks, about three miles from here. Such a nice place it is—ten times better than this. When the old gentleman died, *Mr. Barley* came into the Oaks, and *Mr. Edwin* into this."

Then there was silence again for another half hour. I sat with my eyes closed, and heard them say I was asleep. The young farm labourer, *Duff*, came in at last.

"Well," said he, "it have been a useless chase. I wonder whether I am wanted for anything else."

"Where have you been?" asked *Jemima*.

"Scouring the wood, seven of us, in search of *Mr. Heneage*: and them two mounted police is a-dashing about the roads. We haven't found him."

"*Duff*, *Mr. Heneage* no more did it than you did."

"That's all you know about it," was *Duff*'s answer. "Master says he did."

"Have a cup of coffee, *Duff*?" asked the cook.

"Thank ye," said *Duff*. "I'd be glad on't."

She was placing the cup before him, when he suddenly leaned forward from the chair he had taken, speaking in a covert whisper.

"I say, who do you think was in the wood, a-scouring it, up one path and down another, as much as ever we was?"

"Who?" asked the servants, in a breath.

"The young missis. She hadn't got an earthly thing on her but just what she sits in, indoors. Her hair was down, and her neck and arms was bare; and there she was, a-racing up and down like one demented."

"Tush!" said the cook. "You must have seen double. What should bring young madam dancing about the wood, *Duff*, at this time o' night?"

"I tell ye I see her. I see her three times over. Maybe she was looking for *Mr. Heneage*, too. At any rate, there she was, and with nothing on, as if she'd started out in a hurry, and had forgot to dress herself. And if she don't catch a cold, it's odd to me," added *Duff*. "The fog's as thick as pea-soup, and wets you worse than rain. 'Twas enough to give her her death."

Duff's words were true. As he spoke, a bell called *Jemima* up again. She came back, laid hold of me without speaking, and took me to the

drawing-room. Mrs. Edwin Barley stood there, just come in : she was shaking like a leaf, with the damp and cold, her hair dripping wet. When she had seen her husband leave the hall in search of George Heneage, an impulse came over her to follow and interpose between the anger of the two, should they meet. At least, partly this, partly to look after George Heneage herself, and warn him to escape. She gave me this explanation openly.

"I could not find him," she said, kneeling down before the fire, and holding out her shivering arms to the blaze. I hope and trust he has escaped. One man's life is enough for me to have upon my hands, without having two."

"Oh, Aunt Selina ! *you* did not take Philip King's life !"

"No, I did not take it. And I have been guilty of no intentional wrong. But I did set the one against the other, Anne—in my vanity and wilfulness."

Looking back to the child's eyes with which I saw things then, and judging of these same things with my woman's experience now, I cannot hold Selina Barley entirely to blame. An indulged daughter, she had been suffered to have her own way at Keppe Carew, and grew up to think the world was made for her. Dangerously attractive, fond to excess of admiration, she had probably encouraged Philip King's boyish fancy, and then turned round upon him for it. At the previous Easter, on his former visit, she had been all smiles and sweetness ; this time she had done nothing but turn him into ridicule. "What is sport to you, may be death to me," says the fly to the spider. It might not have mattered so much from *her*, this ridicule ; but she pressed George Heneage into the service : and Philip King was not of a disposition to bear it tamely. His weak health made him appear somewhat of a coward ; he was not strong enough to take the law into his own hands, and repay Heneage with personal chastisement. Selina's liking for George Heneage was no doubt great ; but it was not an improper liking, although the world—the little world at Mr. Edwin Barley's—might have wished to deem it so. Before she married Mr. Edwin Barley, she refused George Heneage, and laughed at him for proposing to her. She should wed a rich man, she told him, or none at all. It was Mr. Edwin Barley himself who invited Heneage to his house, and also Philip King, as it most unfortunately happened. His wife, in her wilful folly—I had almost written her wilful wickedness—played them off, one upon another. The first day they met, Philip King took umbrage at some remark of Mr. Heneage's, and Selina, liking the one, and disliking the other, forthwith began. A few days on, and young King so far forgot his good manners as to tell her she "liked that coxcomb Heneage too much." The reproach made her laugh ; but she, nevertheless, out of pure mischief, did what she could to confirm Philip King in the impression. He, Philip King, took to talk of this to Miss Delves ; he took to

watch Selina and George Heneage ; there could be little doubt that he carried tales of his observation to Mr. Edwin Barley, which only incited Selina to persevere ; the whole thing amused her immensely. What passed between Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Barley in private about it, whether anything or nothing, was never known. At the moment of the accident he was exceedingly vexed with her ; *incensed* may be the proper word.

And poor Philip King ! Perhaps, after all, his death may have been a mistake—if it was in truth George Heneage that it proceeded from. Circumstances, as they came out, seemed to say that he had not been “spying,” but only taking the short cut through the summer-house on his way home from shooting ; an unusual route, it’s true, but not an impossible one. Seeing them on the other side when he entered it, he waited until they should proceed onwards ; but Mrs. Barley’s sudden run up the steps sent him away. Not that he would avoid them ; only make his escape without their seeing him, lest he should be accused of the very thing they did accuse him of—spying. But he was too late ; the creaking of the outer door betrayed him. At least this was the opinion taken up by Mr. Martin, later, when Selina told the whole truth to him, under the seal of secrecy.

But Mrs. Edwin Barley was kneeling before the fire in the drawing-room, with her dripping hair ; and I standing by her, looking on ; and that first terrible night was not over.

“Selina, why did you stay out in the wet fog?”

“I was looking for him, I tell you.”

“But you had nothing on. You might have caught your death, Duff said.”

“And what if I had?” she sharply interrupted. “I’d as soon die as live.”

It was one of her customary random retorts, meaning nothing. Before more was said, strange footsteps and voices were heard on the stairs. Selina started up, and looked at herself in the glass.

“I can’t let them see me like this,” she muttered, clutching her drooping hair. “Wait here, Anne.”

Darting to the side-door she had spoken of as leading to her bedroom, she pulled it open with a wrench, as if a bolt had given way, and disappeared, leaving me standing on the hearth-rug.

CHAPTER IV.

VERY ILL.

HE who first entered the room was a gentleman of middle age and size. His complexion was healthy and ruddy ; his short, dark hair, sprinkled with gray, was combed down upon the forehead ; his countenance was good-natured and simple. This was Mr. Barley of the

Oaks. Not the least resemblance did he bear to his brother. Following him was one in an official dress, who was probably superior to a common policeman, for his manners were good, and Mr. Barley called him "Sir." It was not the same who had been in the hall.

"Oh, this—this must be the little girl," observed Mr. Barley. "Are you Mrs. Edwin's niece, my dear—Miss Hereford?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you know where she is?"

I said I thought she was in her bed-room. It had transpired that a quarrel had taken place the previous Friday between Mr. Heneage and Philip King; and the officer had now been in the kitchen to question Jemima. Jemima disclaimed all knowledge of the affair beyond the fact that she had heard of it from little Miss Hereford, whom she saw on the stairs, crying and frightened. He had now come to question me.

"Now, my little maid, try and recollect," said the officer, drawing me to him. "What did they quarrel about?"

"I don't know, sir," I answered. And I spoke the literal truth, for I had not understood at the time.

"Can you not recollect?"

"I can recollect," I said, looking at him, and feeling that I did not shrink from him, though he was a policeman. "Mr. King seemed to have done something wrong, for Mr. Heneage was angry with him, and called him a spy; but I did not know what it was that he had done. I was too frightened to listen; I ran out of the room."

"Then you did not hear what the quarrel was about?"

"I did not understand, sir. Except that they said that Mr. King was mean, and a spy."

"They!" he repeated, catching me up quickly; "who else was in the room?"

"My Aunt Selina."

"Then she took Mr. Heneage's part?"

"Yes, sir."

"How did the quarrel end? Amicably, or in evil feeling?"

"I don't know, sir. I went away, and stayed in my bed-room."

"My sister-in-law, Mrs. Edwin, may be able to tell you more about it, as she was present," interposed Mr. Barley.

"I dare say she can," was the officer's reply. "It seems a curious thing altogether—that two gentlemen should be visiting at a house, and one should shoot the other. How long had they been staying here?"

"Let's see," said Mr. Barley, rubbing his forefinger upon his forehead. "It must be a month, I fancy, sir, since they came. Heneage was here first; some days before Philip."

"Were they acquainted previously?"

"I—think—not," said Mr. Barley, speaking with hesitation. "Heneage was here on a short visit in the middle of the summer, but not

Philip : whereas Philip was here at Easter, and the other was not. No, sir, I believe they were not acquainted before, but my brother can tell you."

"Who is this Mr. Heneage?"

"Don't you know? He is the son of the member for Wexborough. Oh, he is of very good family—very. A sad blow it will be for them, if things turn out as black as they look. Will he get clear off, think you?"

"You may depend upon it, he would not have got off far, but for this confounded fog that has come on," warmly replied the police-officer. "We shall have him to-morrow, no doubt."

"I never hardly saw such a fog at this time of year," observed Mr. Barley. "I couldn't see a yard before me as I came along. Upon my word, it almost seems as if it had come on on purpose to screen him."

"Was he a pleasant man, this Heneage?"

"One of the nicest fellows you ever met, sir," was Mr. Barley's impulsive reply. "The last week or two Edwin seems to have taken some spite against him; I don't know what was up between them, for my part: but I liked Heneage, what I saw of him, and thought him an uncommon good fellow. Mrs. Edwin Barley has known him a long while; my brother only recently. They all met in London last spring."

"Heneage derives no benefit in any way, by property or otherwise, from his death?" observed the policeman, speaking half as a question, half as a soliloquy.

"It's not likely, sir. The only person to benefit is my brother. He comes in for the estate."

The officer raised his eyes.

"Your brother comes in for young King's fortune, Mr. Barley?"

"Yes, he does. And I'll be bound he never gave a thought to the inheriting of it. How should he, from a young and hearty lad like Philip? Edwin has croaked over Philip's health of late, said he was consumptive, and going the way of his brother Reginald; but I saw nothing amiss with Philip."

"May I ask why you don't inherit, Mr. Barley, being the eldest brother?"

"He was no blood relation to me. My father married twice; I was the son of the first wife; Edwin of the second; and Philip King's father and Edwin's mother were cousins. Philip had no male relative living but my brother, therefore he comes in for all."

Mrs. Edwin Barley appeared at the door, and paused there, as if listening to the conclusion of the last sentence. Mr. Barley turned and saw her, and she came forward. She had twisted up her damp hair, and thrown on a shawl of white China crape. Her eyes were brilliant, her cheeks carmine—beautiful she looked altogether.

The officer questioned her as to the cause of the quarrel which she had been present at, but she would give him no satisfactory answer. She "could not remember;" "Philip King was in the wrong, she knew that;" "the officer must excuse her talking, for her head ached, and her brain felt confused." Such was the substance—all, in fact, that he could get from her. He bowed and withdrew, and Mr. Barley followed him down stairs, Selina bolting the door after them.

"Now, Anne, I must have a little conversation with you," she said. And she proceeded to question me of what had occurred after I left her at the summer-house. I told her; and had got to where Philip King was shot, when she interrupted.

"Good heavens, child! You *saw* him shot?"

"I heard the noise, and saw him fall. It seemed to come from the spot where he had been gazing."

"Did you see who did it?" she asked, scarcely above her breath.

"No."

"Then you saw no one in the wood but Philip King?"

"I saw Mr. Edwin Barley. He was near the spot from whence the shot seemed to come, looking through the trees and standing still, as if he wondered what could be amiss. For, oh, Selina! Philip King's scream was dreadful, and must have been heard a long way."

My aunt caught hold of my arm in a sort of fright. "Anne! what do you say? You saw *Edwin Barley* at that spot! Not Mr. Heneage?"

"I did not see Mr. Heneage at all then. I saw only Mr. Edwin Barley. He came up to Philip King, asking what was the matter."

"Had he his gun with him—Edwin Barley?"

"Yes, he was carrying it."

She dropped my arm, and sat quite still, shrinking as if some blow had struck her. Two or three minutes passed before she spoke again.

"Go on, Anne. What next? Tell me all that passed, for I suppose you heard." And I related what I knew, word for word.

"You have not told me all, Anne."

"Yes, I have."

"Did not Philip King say that Mr. Heneage had raised his gun, aimed at him, and fired?—that he saw him do it?"

"He did not, aunt. He only said what I have told you."

"Lie the first!" she exclaimed, lifting her hand and letting it fall passionately. "Then you never saw Mr. Heneage?"

"I saw him later." And I went on to tell her of the meeting him through my taking the wrong turning. I told her all: how he looked like one in mortal fright; what he said; and of my asking him whether he had done it.

"Well?" she feverishly interrupted. "Well?"

"He quite denied it," I answered, repeating to her exactly the words Mr. Heneage had said.

"You say he looked scared—confused?"

"Yes, very much so."

"And Mr. Edwin Barley—did he?"

"Not at all. He looked just as he always looks. He seemed to be surprised, and very sorry; his voice, when he spoke to Philip King, was kinder than I had ever heard it."

Another pause. She seemed to be thinking.

"I can hardly understand where it was you saw George Heneage, Anne; you must show me, to-morrow. Was it on the same side from which the shot came?"

"Yes; I think near to the place. Or how could he have heard Mr. Barley speak to me?"

"How long had you been in the wood when the shot was fired?"

"About ten minutes or a quarter of an hour."

"Little girls compute time differently from grown people, Anne. A few minutes might seem like a quarter of an hour to you."

"Mamma taught me how differently time appears to pass, according to what we may be doing, Aunt Selina. That when we are pleasantly occupied, it seems to fly; and when we are impatient for it to go on, or in any suspense or fear, it does not seem to move. I think I have learnt to be pretty exact, and I do believe that I was in the wood nearly a quarter of an hour. I was running about for some time, looking for Mr. Heneage, as you told me, before I found I had lost myself. And then I was some minutes getting over the fright. I had said my prayers, and——"

"You had—WHAT?"

"I was much alarmed; I thought I might have to stay in the wood till morning, and I could only pray to God to protect me: I knew that harm would not come to me then. It must have been a quarter of an hour in all: so you see Mr. Heneage did not do it in the heat of passion in running after him: he must have done it deliberately."

"I don't care," she repeated to herself, in a sort of defiant voice; "I know George Heneage did not wilfully shoot Philip King. If he did do it, it was an accident; but I don't believe he did."

"If he did not, why did he hide in the wood, and look as if he had done something wrong, Selina? Why did he not go boldly up, and see what was amiss with Philip King, as Mr. Edwin Barley did?"

"There is no accounting for what people do in these moments of confusion and terror: some act in one way, some in another," she said, slowly. "Anne, I don't like to speak out openly to you—what I fear and what I don't fear. It was imperative upon George Heneage to hasten home—and he may not have believed that Philip King was really dead."

"But, Selina——"

"Go! go! lie down there," she said, drawing me to the distant sofa,

and pushing me on it, with the pillow over my head. "You are asleep, mind! He might think I had been tutoring you."

So sudden and unexpected was the movement, I could only obey, and lie still. Selina unbolted the door, and was back in her seat before Mr. Edwin Barley entered the room.

"Are you coming down to dinner, Selina?"

"Dinner! It is well for you that you can eat it," was her answer. "You must dine without me to-day—those who dine at all. Now, don't disturb that sleeping child, Mr. Barley! I was just going to send her to bed."

"It might do you more good to eat dinner than to roam about in a night-fog," was Mr. Edwin Barley's rejoinder. "It is rather curious you should choose such a night as this to be out, half-naked."

"Not curious," she said, coldly: "very natural."

"Very! Especially that you should be tearing up and down the wood paths, like a mad woman. Others saw you as well as myself, and are speaking of it."

"Let them speak."

"But for what purpose were you there?"

"I was looking for George Heneage. There!—you may make the most of it."

"Did you find him?"

"No. I wish I had: *I wish I had*. I should have learnt from him the truth of this night's business: for the truth, as I believe, has not come to light yet."

"What do you suppose to be the truth?" he returned, in a tone of surprise; whether natural, or assumed, who could say?

"No matter—no matter now: it is something that I scarcely dare to glance at. Better, even, that Heneage had done it, than—than—what I am thinking of. My head is confused to-night," she broke off; "my mind unhinged—hardly sane. You had better leave me, Mr. Barley."

"You had better come and eat a bit of dinner," he said, roughly, but not unkindly. "None of us can touch much, I dare say, but we are going to sit down. William is staying, and so is Martin. Won't you come and try to take a bit? Or I will send you something up."

"It would be of no use."

Mr. Edwin Barley looked at her: she was shivering outwardly and inwardly. I could just see out under the corner of the cushion.

"You have caught a violent cold, Selina. How could you think of going out?"

"I will tell you," she added, in a more conciliating spirit. "I went out because you went. To prevent any encounter between you and George Heneage,—I mean any violence. After that I stayed looking for him."

"You need not have feared violence from me. I should have handed him over to the police, nothing more."

There was a mocking sound in his voice as he spoke. Selina sat down and put her feet on the fender.

"I hate to dine without somebody at the table's head," Mr. Barley said, turning to the door. "If you will not come, I shall ask Charlotte Delves to sit down."

"It is nothing to me who sits down when I am not there."

"He departed with the ungracious reply ringing in his ears: and ungracious I felt it to be. She bolted the door again, and pulled the blue velvet cushion off my head.

"Are you smothered, child? Get up. Now, mark me: you must not say a word to Mr. Edwin Barley of what happened at the summer-house. Do not mention it at all; to him, or to anyone else."

"But suppose I am asked, Selina?"

"How can you be asked? Philip King is gone, poor fellow; George Heneage is not here; and who else is there to ask you? You surely have not spoken of it already?" she continued, in a tone of alarm.

I had not spoken of it to anyone, and told her so. *Jemima* had questioned me as to the cause of my terror, when I ran in from the wood, and I said I had heard a shot and a scream; I had not courage to say more.

"That's well," said Selina.

She sent me to rest, ordering *Jemima* to stay by me until I was asleep. "The child may feel nervous," she remarked to her, in an under tone, but the words reached me. And I suppose *Jemima* felt nervous, for one of the other servants came too.

On the following morning Mrs. Edwin Barley was ill. It transpired that Mr. Edwin Barley, with his brother and some more gentlemen, had been out part of the night, looking after George Heneage. It was getting towards morning when they returned, and Mr. Edwin Barley would not go to his wife's room to disturb her.

She lay in bed, and her voice, as she spoke to me, did not sound like her own.

"Are you ill, Selina? Why do you speak so hoarsely?"

"I feel very ill, Anne. My throat is bad—or my chest, I can scarcely tell which: perhaps it is both. Go down stairs, and send Miss Delves to me."

I have said that I was an imaginative, thoughtful, excitable child, and as I hastened to obey her, one sole recollection (I could have said fear) kept running through my brain. It was the oracular observation made by Duff, relating to his mistress and the fog: "It's enough to give her her death!" Suppose she *had* caught her death? My fingers, fastening my narrow waist-band, trembled at the thought.

The first thing I saw when I went down was a large high screen of

many folds, raised across the hall, shutting out part of it from view. It seemed to strike me back with fear. Sarah was coming out of the dining-room with a duster in her hand. I caught hold of her gown.

"Sarah, what is behind there?"

"The same that was last night, miss," she answered. "Nothing is to be moved until the coroner has come."

"Have they taken Mr. Heneage?"

"Not that I have heard of, miss. One of the police was in just now, and he told Miss Delves there was no news."

"I want to find Miss Delves. Where is she?"

"In master's study. You can go in. Don't you know which it is? It's that room built out at the back, half-way up the first flight of stairs. You can see the door from here."

In the study sat Mr. Barley and Mr. Edwin Barley at breakfast, Charlotte Delves serving them. I gave her my aunt's message, but was nearly scared out of my senses at being laid hold of by Mr. Edwin Barley.

"Go up at once, Charlotte, and see what it is," he said. "How do you say, little one—that her throat is bad?"

"Yes, sir; she cannot speak well."

"No wonder; she has only herself to thank," he muttered, as Charlotte Delves left the room. "The wonder would be if she were not ill."

"Why?" asked Mr. Barley, curiously, lifting his head.

"Oh, she got frightened last night when poor Philip was brought in, and ran out in the fog after me with nothing on."

He released my arm, and Mr. Barley put a chair for me beside him, and gave me some breakfast. I had taken quite a liking to him, he was so simple and kind. He told me he had no little girls of his own, and his wife was always ill, unable to go out.

"Mrs. Edwin Barley appears exceedingly poorly," said Charlotte Delves, when she returned. "Lowe said he should be here this morning; he shall see her when he comes. She must have taken cold."

Scarcely had she spoken when the surgeon arrived. Mr. Edwin Barley went up-stairs with him. Mr. Lowe came down alone, and I caught a moment to speak to him when no one was listening.

"Will my aunt Selina get well, sir?"

"I do not know, my dear," he answered, turning upon me his grave face. "I fear she is going to be very ill."

Sunday passed and Monday came. Nothing could be heard of George Heneage. The police scoured the country; handbills were printed, offering a reward for his apprehension; no effort was left untried, but he was not found. Opinions were freely bandied about: some said he must have escaped in the fog, and got off by the railway from Nettleby, or by the other line beyond Hallam; others thought he was lying con-

ceased near the spot still. Mr. Edwin Barley was in great anger at his escape, and avowed he would pursue him to the death.

Not on this day, but the following one, Mr. Heneage's father came to the house—a fine old gentleman, with white hair. Mr. Lowe corrected me for calling him old, and said he could not be much more than fifty. I had not then the experience to know that while young people call fifty old, those past that age are apt to style it young. I saw him twice as he went along the passages, but was not close to him. He was a courteous, gentlemanly man, but seemed bowed down with grief. It was said he could not understand the calamity at all, and decidedly refused to believe in his son's guilt. If the shot had in truth proceeded from him, the gun must have gone off by accident.

"Then why should he run away?" argued Mr. Edwin Barley.

He stayed in the house altogether but about two hours, and had an interview with Mrs. Edwin Barley in her bed-room before his departure.

In the afternoon the coroner's inquest sat. It was held in the dining-room. The chief witness was Mr. Edwin Barley. I was not called upon, and Selina said it was a proof that he had not mentioned I was present at the time. You may be sure I took care not to mention it; neither did she. Nothing transpired touching the encounter at the summer-house; therefore the affair appeared to the public involved in mystery. Mr. Edwin Barley protested that it was a mystery to him. He could not conceive what motive Heneage could have had in taking Philip King's life. Mr. Edwin Barley testified that Philip King, in dying, had asserted he saw George Heneage take aim and fire at him, and there was nobody to contradict the assertion. I knew Philip King had not said so much; but no one else knew it, save Mrs. Edwin Barley, and she only from me. They did not call upon her to appear at the inquest: it was assumed that she knew nothing whatever about the transaction.

Charlotte Delves was called, at the request of the jury, because Philip King had sat with her in her parlour for half an hour the morning of his death; but she proved that he had not touched upon any point of dispute, or spoken then of George Heneage. The feeling between them had not been good, she said, and there used to be bickering and disputes. "What about?" asked the jury; but Miss Delves "could not say:" she would not bring in Mr. Edwin Barley's name.

While the inquest was sitting I was in Selina's room. She seemed very restless, turning about in bed continually, and telling me to listen how it was "going on." But I could hear nothing, though I went often on the stairs to try.

"What was that stir just now, Anne?"

"They called from the dining-room to have the chandelier lighted. John went in and did it."

"Is it dark, Anne?"

"Not dark. It is getting dark."

Dark it appeared to be in the chamber, for the crimson silk curtains were drawn before the large, deep bay-window, and also partially round the bed. You could distinguish the outline of objects, and that was all. I went close up to the bed and looked at her; she was buried in the pillows: that she was very ill I knew, for a physician from Nettleby had come that morning with Mr. Lowe.

"I think it must be over," she said, as a bustle was heard below. "Go and see, Anne."

I went half-way down the stairs in the dark. Nobody had thought to light the hall-lamp. Sure enough, they were pouring out of the room, a crowd of dark figures, talking as they came, and slowly making for the hall-door. Suddenly I distinguished Mr. Edwin Barley coming towards the stairs.

To his study, as I thought, and back went I, not caring to encounter him. Added to my childish dislike and fear of Mr. Edwin Barley, since Saturday night another impulse to avoid him had been added: a dread, which I could not divest myself of, that he might question me as to that meeting at the summer-house, and to the subsequent interview with George Heneage. Selina had ordered me to be silent; but if he found anything out and questioned me, what could I do? I know that the fear was upon me then and for a long time afterwards.

I crept swiftly back again up the stairs, and into my aunt's room. Surely he was not coming to it! Those were his footsteps, and they drew nearer: he could not have turned into his study! No, they came on. On the impulse of the moment, I pushed behind the heavy window-curtain. It was drawn straight across from wall to wall, leaving a space between it and the bow of the window, nearly as large as a small room. There were three chairs there, in the middle of the window and at the two sides. I sat down on one of them, and, pulling the white blind slightly aside, looked out at the dark figures who were then sauntering down the avenue.

"Well, it's over," said Mr. Edwin Barley, as he came in and shut the door. "And now all the work will be to find him."

"How has it ended?" asked his wife.

"Wilful murder! The coroner was about to clear the room, but the jury intimated that they required no deliberation, and returned their verdict at once."

"Wilful murder against whom?"

"Against George Heneage. Did you suppose it was against you or me?"

There was a pause. I felt in miserable indecision, knowing that I ought, in honour, to go out and show myself, but not daring to do it. Selina resumed, speaking as emphatically as her inflamed throat permitted.

"I cannot believe—I never will believe—that George Heneage was capable of committing murder. His whole nature would rise up against it : as his father said in this room a few hours ago. If the shot did come from his gun, it must have been fired inadvertently."

"The shot did come from his gun," returned Mr. Edwin Barley. "There's no 'if' in the question."

"I am aware you say so ; but it was passing strange that you, also with your gun, should have been upon the spot. Now, stay!—don't put yourself in a passion. I cannot help saying it. I think all this suspense and uncertainty are killing me!"

Mr. Edwin Barley dragged a chair to the side of the bed, anger in the very sound. I felt ready to drop, lest he should see me through the slit in the curtain.

"We will have this out, Selina. It is not the first time you have given utterance to hints that you ought to be ashamed of. Do you suspect that I shot Philip King?"

His tone was so stern that, perhaps, she did not like to say "yes" outright, and tampered with the question.

"Not exactly that. But there's only your word to prove that it was George Heneage. And you know how incensed you have latterly been against him!"

"Who caused me to be incensed? You!"

"There was no real cause. Were it the last word I had to speak, Edwin"—and she burst into tears—"were I dying, I would assert it. I never cared for George Heneage in the way you fancy."

"I fancy! Had I fancied that, I should have flung George Heneage out of my house long ago," was his rejoinder, spoken calmly. "But now, hear me, Selina. It has been your pleasure to declare so much to me. On my part, I declare to you that Heneage, and Heneage only, killed Philip King. Dispossess your mind of all dark folly. You must be insane, I think, to take it up against your husband."

"Did you see Heneage fire?" she asked, after a silence.

"No. I should have known pretty surely that it could only be Heneage, had there been no proof against him ; but there were Philip's dying words. Still, I did not see Heneage at the place, and I have never said I did. I was pushing home through the wood, and halted a second, thinking I heard voices : at that very moment a shot was fired close to me—close, mind you—not two yards off ; but the trees are thick just there, and whoever fired it was hid from my view. I was turning to search, when Philip King's awful scream rang out, and I pushed my head beyond the trees and saw him in the act of falling to the ground. I hastened to him, and the other escaped. This is the entire truth, so far as I am cognisant of it."

It might have been the truth ; and, again, it might not. It was just one of those things that depend upon the credibility of the utterer.

What little corroboration there was, certainly was on Mr. Edwin Barley's side : *only* that he had asserted more than was true of the dying words of Philip King. If these were the simple facts, the truth, why have added falsehood to them ?

"Heneage could have had no motive to take the life of Philip King," argued Mrs. Edwin Barley. "That he would have caned him, or given him some other sound chastisement, I grant you—and richly he deserved it, for he was the cause of all the ill-feeling that had arisen in the house—but, to kill him ! No, no !"

"And yet you would deem me capable of it !"

"I am not accusing you. But when you come to speak of motives, I cannot help seeing that George Heneage could have had none."

"You have just observed that the author of the mischief, the bad feeling which had sprung up in the house, was Philip King ; but you are wrong. The author was you, Selina."

No answer. She put up one of her hot hands, and shaded her eyes.

"I forgive you," he continued. "I am willing to bury the past in silence : never to recur to it—never henceforth to allude to it, though the boy was my relative and ward, and I liked him. But I would recommend you to bear this tragical ending in mind, as a warning for the future. I will not tolerate further folly in my wife ; and your own sense ought to tell you that had I been ambitious of putting somebody out of the world, it would have been Heneage, not Philip. Heneage has killed him, and upon his head be the consequences. I will never cease my endeavours to bring him to the drop. I will spare no pains, or energy, or cost, until it is accomplished. So help me, Heaven !"

He rose with the last solemn word, and put the chair back in its place. On his way to the door he turned, speaking in a softer voice.

"Are you better this evening, Selina ?"

"Not any. It seems to me that I grow worse with every hour."

"I'll send Lowe up to you. He is somewhere about."

"Oh, aunt, aunt !" I said, going forward with lifted hands and streaming eyes, as he left the chamber, "I was here all the time ! I saw Mr. Edwin Barley coming in, and I hid behind the window-curtain. I never meant to be a listener : I was afraid to come out."

She looked at me without speaking, and her face, hot with fever, grew more flushed. She seemed to be considering ; perhaps remembering what had passed.

"I—I—don't think there was anything very particular said, that you need care ; or, rather, that I need," she said at length. "Was there ?"

"No, Selina. Only——"

"Only what, child ? Why do you hesitate ?"

"You think it might have been Mr. Edwin Barley. I wish I had not heard that."

"I said, or implied, it was as likely to have been he as the other.

Anne," she suddenly added, "you possess thought and sense beyond your years: what do you think?"

"I think it was Mr. Heneage. I think so because he has run away, and because he looked so strangely when he was hiding. And I do not think it was Mr. Edwin Barley. When he told you how it occurred just now, and that it was not he, his voice sounded as though he were speaking truth."

"Oh, dear!" she moaned, "I hope it was so! What a mercy if that Philip King had never come near the house!"

"But, Selina, you are sorry that he is dead?"

"Sorry that he is dead? Of course, I am sorry. What a curious child you are! He was no favourite of mine; but," she cried, passionately clasping her hands, "I would give all I am worth to call him back to life."

But I could not be reconciled to what I had done, and sobbed on heavily, until lights and Mr. Lowe came in together.

(To be continued.)

TWILIGHT NIGHT.

I.

WE met, hand to hand,
We clasped hands close and fast,
As close as oak and ivy stand ;
But it is past :
Come day, come night, day comes at last.

We loosed hand from hand,
We parted face from face ;
Each went his way to his own land
At his own pace,
Each went to fill his separate place.

If we should meet one day,
If both should not forget,
We shall clasp hands the accustomed way,
As when we met
So long ago, as I remember yet.

II.

Where my heart is (wherever that may be)
Might I but follow !
If you fly thither over heath and lea,
O honey-seeking bee,
O careless swallow,
Bid some for whom I watch keep watch for me.

Alas ! that we must dwell, my heart and I,
So far asunder.
Hours wax to days, and days and days creep by ;
I watch with wistful eye,
I wait and wonder :
When will that day draw nigh—that hour draw nigh ?
Not yesterday, and not, I think, to-day ;
Perhaps to-morrow.
Day after day “ to-morrow ” thus I say :
I watched so yesterday
In hope and sorrow,
Again to-day I watch the accustomed way.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

CHRISTMAS EVE IN ROME.

AN INCIDENT.

"**A** MELANCHOLY Christmas we shall have this year, thanks to that firebrand Garibaldi and his crew!" So writes my cousin Charles from Rome. He is a "pervert," and one of the Papisti, and rather delights in giving a sly hit at my sympathy with Young Italy in general, and Garibaldi in particular.

But though we spar upon political ground, my cousin and I are good friends, and are at any rate simpatica, as the Italians say, upon one point—namely, love of Rome, the city of remembrance and of hope.

I have cause to love Rome, however, that cousin Charles wots not of, and the mention of Christmas, with which he begins his last letter, and I my story, brings with it such a crowd of associations, clustering round Christmas-tide and Rome both, that I lay down his letter, and let my thoughts wander back to my first Christmas in Rome, six years ago.

My father, my aunt Lucy, my dear dead mother's eldest sister, and I, had been staying a month or two in Florence. We intended to return thither in spring, and had planned to leave for Rome early in November. But one attraction and another, the glorious picture-galleries, a circle of friends, art-loving and kindly, the disinclination to move from pleasant quarters, all combined to keep us in Florence until the 23rd of December.

Christmas Eve we had always meant to spend in Rome, and to go together to the Pastorale Service at St. Peter's; so the 23rd was the latest day that could possibly be fixed for leaving Florence.

The morning found the city of flowers wrapped in a thick white fog, and I think the chilly aspect of the place, as we drove to the station, tended to lessen our regret at leaving it.

A few miles out of Florence the fog cleared away, and by the time we reached Leghorn a true Italian sunshine glowed over the harbour. After the usual difficulties at the Messagerie, with officials, and on the quay with importunate facchini and extortionate boatmen, we and our luggage were stowed away in a boat, and rowed to the steamer. Two hours elapsed before the start, during which the sun went down rosily into the dark green water, and I watched him near the horizon, and listened dreamily the while to a young lad singing to guitar accompaniment from his boat, that rocked under lee of the steamer just below me.

We had a pleasant voyage ; that is, all of us who were good sailors. The sea was so calm as to make any malaise a disgrace. Nevertheless, my father declared himself uncomfortable, and left aunt Lucy and me pacing the deck under the moonlight before ten o'clock, which we thought very stupid and prosaic of him !

By that time the deck was strewn with recumbent forms, or rather formless masses of wrappers and rugs, the only human sign about which consisted in occasional snorts and grunts, or a restless movement, that showed the owner of the rugs was dreaming uneasily of his recent struggles with the Leghorn boatmen, or the rush he made to secure a place at the first dinner with the passengers from Genoa.

At last aunt Lucy and I had to succumb to tired eyes and weary limbs, and went below, to sleep on our respective shelves in the ladies' cabin. We were both very excited at the prospect of seeing Rome the next day, for the first time, and my head was so full of schemes and imaginings, that I slept very little. There was a small round window close to my shelf, and as I lay I could see the heaving line of water, and the moon. She grew large and red, and sank below the horizon, just as I closed my eyes and fell asleep.

A golden morning, cold and clear, found us at Civita Vecchia, and somewhat consoled us for the weary time of waiting while our luggage, after it had been with difficulty got out of the hold and recognized, was sent on shore and examined at the Custom-house. My aunt and I stayed in the dreary coffee-room of the dreary hotel, while my father had his patience and temper tried at the Bureau. Our own trials seemed light, however, compared with the fate of a lady fellow-passenger, who was waiting in equal weariness for the return of her husband. Her meditations, poor thing ! were rudely broken by the appearance of an official, dragging in his arms a ball-dress belonging to her, which had just been decreed seditious and suspicious by the authorities at the Custom-house, because, forsooth, it was white, trimmed with red fuchsias and green leaves and ribbon,—a conjunction of the Italian tri-color very culpable, and highly suggestive of treason and Garibaldi !

Poor lady ! We left her lamenting over her damaged dress, despoiled of its ornaments, and otherwise decorated with dust from the streets of Civita Vecchia, through which it had been ignominiously borne !

The transit from Civita Vecchia is slow, and the country uninteresting and sad. We were full of anticipation, however, and I grew breathless with excitement as each mile brought us nearer to Rome.

The entrance, at last, was rather damping, certainly, and the drive from the pen-like station gave one no favourable impression of the grand old city.

We had secured lodgings in the Piazza di Spagna, through the good offices of my cousin Charles, who was then, as now, resident in Rome. He had written to tell us of them, and to regret that he should be so

"occupied with the services of his church" as to be unable to meet us at our lodgings, but would "call the next day, Christmas Day, at half-past nine, to take us to St. Peter's;" he supposed we "had no thought of the Pastorale, or Christmas Eve Vigil?" "As if it wasn't the very thing we *have* thought of!" I exclaimed; while my father paused over this passage, as he conned the letter en route to our lodgings.

The coachman pulled up at a high-arched door, in the Piazza di Spagna, and, on entering, we found ourselves in semi-darkness.

"What a hole!" said my father, who, though a traveller in his young days, had been a stay-at-home for many years, and had English notions as to what constituted "respectable lodgings." "Run up, child," he continued to me, "and see if you can find your way to the second floor through this darkness. What Charles can have meant——" but the rest was lost upon me, for, feeling for a hand-rail, I ran up the stone staircase. A grated window, innocent of glass, revealed the first landing, sizeable enough, with four doors, two with visiting-cards nailed on them, ranged round it. The next flight of steps seemed to bring fresher air, and more light; and through a window I caught a glimpse of evening sky, against which a tier of picturesque roofs glowed golden and red-brown. I pulled the tinkling bell at a door on this second landing, and a comely Italian dame made her appearance. Even in my hurry, the grand head, crowned with plaits, struck me as in strange contrast to the poor dirty dress she wore. I grew used to such discrepancy in Roman women in a very few days. By this time my father and aunt Lucy had joined me, and made known who we were, and what we wanted. The woman was in distress. She had understood from the English Signor that the excellent family would not arrive till the 27th, and this was the 24th, and she had that very day let another English Signor have a portion of the apartment. He was out now, and when he would return she did not know. Half the apartment was at our disposal, certainly, a saloon and two bed-rooms; at least, the Signorina could have a bed put up in the ante-chamber, &c., &c. She rattled on volubly, with a thousand gesticulations of hands, shoulders, head, till my father's Italian and patience were almost exhausted. We were standing in the ante-chamber, which she so kindly allotted as my sleeping apartment, and were in high flow of dispute, when a steady step sounded on the stairs, and paused just outside the door. A clear, rather low, but distinct voice called on "Signora Bruna." Out rushed the padrona, exclaiming, "Eccolo, eccolo! ecco il Signore." So we went out too, and saw the tall figure of a gentleman, standing with his back to the staircase-window. He took off his wide-awake hat as we came out, and the light shone upon waves of brown hair, that seemed to shine like a halo in the gloom. In a very quiet way he elicited the state of affairs, and courteously offered to remove himself and his effects from the apartment. He could easily find room elsewhere, he said;

indeed, he knew he could be accommodated on the primo piano. The quiet voice made a stillness in the turmoil, and my heart seemed to leap up to meet it.

In a very short space of time the stranger collected his properties together, had his boxes pushed into the ante-room, and settled his bill with Signora Bruna. I was occupied in seeing to the bestowal of our own luggage, for my father had complained of a sudden attack of giddiness, and aunt Lucy was in attendance upon him; yet I could not but notice the silent celerity of the stranger, who never lifted his eyes to observe upon our movements, and seemed absorbed in the one effort to remove himself out of our way as soon as possible.

I was standing on the landing-place, seeing to the disposal of our last box, as he passed out. It was dark, and I involuntarily raised the candle I held in my hand to light him as he came out. The flame shone upon both our faces as he looked up; two earnest eyes gazed fixedly into mine, and then over the grave face broke a sudden and very brilliant smile. "Good night," he said, and was gone. "Nothing remarkable in 'good night' from a polite stranger," I chided myself, impatiently, as I turned back into the rooms. But it was no use to chide; the voice and the smile haunted me. I found my father faint, and evidently unwell. So aunt Lucy and I coaxed him to lie quietly on the sofa, while we settled matters generally. Signora Bruna undertook to supply dinner from a neighbouring restaurant, and in every arrangement showed the quickness and bonhommie of an Italian.

The evening wore on; dinner had been dispatched, and the padrona had come in to inquire what she could next do for us. Was there anything we wanted? Yes, there was, said my father. She was to order a comfortable carriage to take two ladies to St. Peter's to the midnight service, wait for them, and bring them back.

Aunt Lucy and I broke in with exclamations. "We don't want to go." "We won't go without you." "We can't go alone, it would be dreadful; in a strange place, too," and so forth.

But my father silenced us with invincible arguments. We had come to Rome that day on purpose, he said. He was very sorry he was too ill to go with us, but there could be no impropriety in ladies going to church alone; and as to difficulties, did we expect to be run away with, by the Pope's orders, or what? The Signora confirming, and my father persistent, we ladies yielded with a good grace; our only suggestion of sending a message to Charles, or to friends whose addresses we had, being stifled in the bud with, "it's too late for that."

The carriage was ordered at half-past two, and we agreed to go early to bed to obtain what sleep we might before starting. So at ten we wished each other good-night. My father's parting injunction, as he lifted the striped curtain and opened his bedroom-door, was, "Mind to keep together to-night. Lucy, I depend on you for restraining that

madcap girl if she proposes to leave you." "Papa!" I remonstrated; but with a warning shake of the finger my father dropped the curtain, and disappeared.

At half-past one aunt Lucy roused me from a dream that I was on board the steamer again, watching the sun rise; and, as I watched, the sun seemed to move and come straight across the sea to me; and as it came, it quivered and changed, and changed and quivered, till it grew like the face of the stranger Englishman. And it came nearer and nearer, till it almost touched me, and then suddenly it was like the Pope's head, with a triple crown on it. Another minute, and I woke to find aunt Lucy's face looking into mine, and saying, "Get up, Mildred! What were you dreaming of?" she added, as I drowsily slipped out of bed. "You looked so happy, and ejaculated 'Good night!' in quite a sentimental voice." I eluded an answer, and felt rather conscience-stricken!

By half-past two we had dressed, drank some coffee, and, rather shivering with the cold air and excitement together, stepped into the carriage and drove off, leaving the padrona standing at the door, with a flickering candle lighting her face, and bringing her scarlet 'kerchief'd head into magnificent relief against the black archway.

A flood of moonlight filled St. Peter's Piazza as we drove through it. A clear and yet mysterious radiance revealed the long colonnades, the fountains splashing and shimmering, the grand flight of steps, and the *presence* of the dome, while the grand bell sounded over all like the solemn voice of the almost unearthly beauty of the scene.

One can see St. Peter's but once as we saw it that night.

We ascended the steps, lifted by great effort the heavy curtain-door, and passed up into the church—darkness and space, a dimly-shining pavement, gliding figures, and distant chaunting.

We walked on slowly. The chaunting grew more distinct, and across the darkness lay a band of bright light that streamed from a chapel on the left. We tracked the light and the sound, and found ourselves among the crowd in the choir chapel, where the service was then going on.

I could not have then described what we heard or saw, nor can I do so now. I moved as in a dream, and saw everything as a vision. Rows of venerable ecclesiastics, installed in carved niches, robed in purple, with suggestions of white and scarlet; here and there an olive-complexioned face, clear-cut features, and black eyes that flashed upon the crowd as it swayed to and fro at the entrance to the chapel; a blaze of light at the altar, fronting the gate; priests in gorgeous robes; incense; a picture of the Nativity, for the shepherds of the Campagna to look at, and remember how the shepherds bowed before the Child-Saviour in the poor manger, and found therein a presence more awful than even the angelic vision that yet burned upon their eyes: all this I dimly saw.

In the crowd were, indeed, veritable shepherds. Wild wondering eyes gazed into the light and the incense : uncouth forms, clothed in sheep skins, shouldered through the iron gates of the chapel and stood immoveable, transfixed. And the strange singing went on, rather uncouth, too, to a sensitive ear, but with strange fascination in it, heightened by the weird tones of the soprano voices.

Aunt Lucy and I looked and listened together. The chapel was full when we arrived, and we found the crowd rather rough to stand amongst. Now, a brown-robed monk pushed his way through, or an English gentleman made forcible egress for wife or daughter, or a shaggy shepherd planted himself, as on a post of observation, just in front of us, and swayed to and fro in bewildered amazement, uncomfortably unconscious of his neighbours !

I was looking intently at an old canon, who had fallen asleep in his niche, and was being recalled to his duties by a sharp-visaged ecclesiastic next him, when there was a sudden movement in the crowd ; a lady had fainted, and was being supported out of the chapel. There was a rush and tumult, and I was forced away from aunt Lucy's side and impelled out into the church. The instant I could, I went back to the place where I had left her ; she was gone ! In vain I pushed my way from one point to another ; I could see her face nowhere. I wandered out into the church, and sought for her familiar figure in the shadowy aisles, and up and down the great nave. I felt frightened and confused. Everything had lost its charm. The strange crowd horrified me, and I thought every one stared at me ; I was afraid of the light, and still more of the darkness. I wandered up to the shrine under the great dome, and the vastness of the dim height was a terror to me.

Some one passed and looked, came back quickly, and said, in a low, clear voice, "Pardon me ; but if I can give you assistance, will you allow me ?" It was the "stranger Englishman" of the morning. His voice was such a comfort to me, I believe I uttered a little cry of joy ; and, as if he had been a friend, I told him my troubles. It never seemed to occur to me that he was a nameless stranger. He had seen my face in the chapel, he said, and had noticed I was with another lady, which must be his excuse for speaking to me when he saw me afterwards alone : he had thought it likely I had lost my companion. "It was such a comfort to hear your voice," I said simply, just as we were crossing the stream of light from the choir chapel. He turned his face and looked at me, and that brilliant smile shone out again with a flash that made my head drop, I knew not why. He led me out of the church, which seemed grand and beautiful again now, and we came out upon the broad steps, and found daylight breaking, gray and cold and chill, over the Piazza. I remembered the name of our coachman, but we inquired vainly for him and his carriage. At last a sleepy driver of a "legno" said he thought Giorgio Petri had driven off the Piazza as

he drove on, and there was a lady in the carriage—yes, certainly, now he remembered, there *was* a lady.

So aunt Lucy was safe ; that was delightful. A coachman was found willing to keep his party waiting whilst he earned an extra fare from us, and we drove quickly, while the dawn lightened into day, back to the Piazza di Spagna. As our carriage stopped at the arched door, a beggar, coiled up just inside, uncoiled, and came out and shook himself. As we went up the staircase, the lamp, which all Romans must burn at the entrance to lodging-houses, flickered and went out. My companion laughed, and drawing a coil of taper out of his pocket, lit it with a match. "We must not come in like thieves," he said. It is strange how I remember every incident of that night still. The knock at the second story brought aunt Lucy's white face to the door. She almost screamed for joy at seeing me, and listened breathless to my companion's quiet narration of what had occurred. Aunt Lucy overwhelmed him with gratitude, and said that my father would call upon him and thank him for his courteous kindness the next day, if he would give us his name, &c. The stranger smiled. "I think," he said, "that Mr. Hope will scarcely find me wholly unknown. I did not hear this morning who he was ; but Miss Hope has incidentally mentioned the name, and by a coincidence I find that my father's old friend, Mr. Hope, about whose arrival he wrote to me last week, is the gentleman whose lodgings I vacated this morning ! My name is Leslie." Then ensued mutual congratulations between Mr. Leslie and aunt Lucy. Aunt Lucy gave an account how she had lost me in St. Peter's, and after a vain search had thought it best to drive back. She had only returned a quarter of an hour, and was deliberating what to do, and whether to rouse my father, when we came in. Then she pressed Mr. Leslie to have some breakfast, but he declined, and bowed himself out with a promise to call next day. "Would you mind holding the taper?" he said, as I accompanied him to the door. I took it, a little amused, and held it high to light him on the staircase. He turned, as his foot touched the second step, and looked back at me a moment or two.

"I saw you first, holding the light so," he said, quietly. "I thought you were Saint Filomena to me. Good night ; no, it is good morning now."

But my story is finished, for Christmas eve is over, and Christmas morning begun. Mr. Leslie came to see my father next day, who was much better, and delighted to make acquaintance with the son of his old friend, Colonel Leslie, of the —th. I was much laughed at for losing myself on my first visit to St. Peter's, but I never could see why I was more foolish than aunt Lucy ! Perhaps it was because of the sequel that my father used to say, I lost myself "on purpose to be found," he believed !

He says so more than ever now, though really the joke is very old, for Mr. Leslie and I have been married more than five years.

SHAVING THE PONIES' TAILS.

TOD did it. He made me hold the light, and he fastened them up to the manger, one at a time; and with Gruff Blossom's scissors, that were bigger than shears, he set to work. I had never been so frightened in my life before. Old Hetley was in-doors, Blossom was about somewhere, and there was no knowing which of them might come in upon us. Tod—— But I had better begin at the beginning.

He lived at Dyke Manor, and his name was Todhetley. I mean the old Pater, not Tod; and, if you please, we must go back a few years, or you may not be able to understand it.

Old Todhetley was very rich; the farmers and people round about called him the Squire. He had no wife; she died when young Tod was a baby. Tod's proper name was the same as his father's, Joseph. *We* lived at the Court, three miles off, and I had no mother, any more than Tod had, for she was dead too. My father was William Ludlow; he was well off, but not so rich as Squire Todhetley, and they were good friends. I was John; and they called me Johnny.

One morning, when I was four years old, the servants told me I had a new mamma. I can see her now as she looked when she came home. We had a high post with a lamp upon it, outside the gate, and she was as tall and thin and upright as that; she had a pinched nose and flat, light curls on her forehead. Hannah said she was thirty-five—she was talking to Eliza while she dressed me—and they both agreed that she looked like a Tartar. She was a Miss Marks, who used to play the organ in church, and teach music; and Eliza said the master might have chosen better. I understood that they meant papa, and asked why he might have chosen better; upon which they both shook me, and said that they had not been speaking about my papa at all, but of the old blacksmith round the corner.

Papa died that year. At the end of another, Mrs. Ludlow married Mr. Todhetley, and we went to live at Dyke Manor; she, I, and Hannah. Tod did not like it. His father mostly called him Joe, the servants Master Joseph; but at school—to which we both went together—with the boys he was always "Tod," and I fell into the same habit. In contradistinction, I suppose, we got into the way of calling the Squire Old Hetley behind his back, and Pater to his face. Tod had been regularly spoilt by his father, awfully indulged; and naturally he did not like the invasion. As time went on, things grew uncomfortable. Tod and his step-mother waged mutual war in the holidays; the Pater resented it on Tod, and Tod resented it on both.

And now we can go on again from the present time. Tod was turned seventeen, and as big as a house; tall, and strong, and dark, with an imperious manner and a will of his own. I was fifteen; fair, delicate, and timid. People called me a muff; and they said Tod looked nearly old enough and wise enough to be my father. There were two little children at the Manor now: Hugh and Lena.

We were at home for the Christmas holidays. Things had gone on pretty peaceably the first week, but that came to an end. I think if Tod had taken the pains to understand Mrs. Todhetley better, he would not have hated her so. I used to say "Mamma" to her at times still, but he never would—he called her Madam. I am sure she would have been glad to be friends with him, but something was always happening to make them angry with each other. It rarely came to open battle of words; Tod was sarcastically cool to Mrs. Todhetley.

We did lead the children into mischief. Tod did, that is, and I helped. We loved them both; and Tod would have saved them from real injury with his life. "But we can't let Hugh grow up a milksop, you know, Johnny," he would say to me; "and that's what his mother is doing for him. I tell the Pater so." Everything Mrs. Todhetley said, everything she did, Tod resented. Not to herself, you know, but to himself. Before she came to the Manor, things were conducted there with a profuse hand; the Squire spending all his income; since then, expenses had been curtailed. First, this extravagance was cut off, next that toned down, until the outlay became moderate. Tod resented this worse than all.

We came home from church on Christmas Day; the Pater, Tod, I, and Hugh. Mrs. Todhetley had the tooth-ache, and did not go; she was always having it. Lena ran out in a white frock and blue sash, as we got home, and said the Sterlings had not come yet—who were to dine with us.

"There's plenty of time," cried the Pater. "We dine at four, and it's not two yet."

Tod and I divided an apple-pie, and then went out together. First of all, we had a look at the ponies, Punch and Toby; two beautiful black creatures, the pride of the Squire's stables, with flowing manes, and tails that touched the ground. They had been a recent purchase, and the Pater talked of them to everybody. The close carriage had been laid down long ago; another of Mrs. Todhetley's innovations. It stood in the great coach-house still, but the horses had been sold. As a matter of comfort, the want affected neither Tod nor his father, it had been so rarely used; but Tod chose to be bitter over the curtailment. The Squire drove his ponies, he rode his saddle-horses, and Mrs. Todhetley went out in a low basket-chaise, drawn by a mild she-donkey. It was safer for the children, she thought. Tod went into fits whenever he met the procession.

Giles was in the stable, giving the ponies their beans. He had been groom there a long while; a cross-tempered fellow, especially when they called him "dwarf," from his small size, and he had never taken cordially to the ponies. An old horse that Giles cared for, if he cared for anything, had been got rid of to make room for the ponies, and Giles put on resentment, after the fashion of his young master.

"They eat well, Giles," remarked Tod, who had little Hugh in his hand.

"Ugh!" grunted Giles. "They'd eat their yeads off, an' 'ud let 'em, they creatures 'ould. I know I wish they was buried, I do; they got me into a nice row with the master this morning."

"How was that?"

"About their exercising; and their food. He says I neglect 'em; 'ud serve all the horses afore I'd serve them. I said I knowed my duties to them as well as I knowed it to others; and then the row set in. Master's as fond o' they two cantankerous animals as he is of his children."

"Fonder than of me," put in Tod, who was laughing at Giles.

"I 'dun know about that, Master Joe; I know these ponies is always a making mischief atween me and others. It's they tails the Squire's proud on," added Giles, disparagingly, "and the animals is the same; you just watch 'em a bit else, a switching of 'em everlasting! I'd shave they tails off, for two pins."

"You would, would you!" broke upon our startled ears, and there stood the Squire at the stable-door, to the consternation of me and Giles. I had done nothing; but felt just as if I had. Tod kept his ground unmoved, and laid hold of Punch's tail; as if calculating what the trouble would be to dock it.

Letting the horsehair drop gradually from his fingers, he went off with Hugh; I followed, leaving the Squire and Giles to it. By the sounds that supervened, it seemed the "row," as Giles had designated it, of the morning was being renewed.

We went as far as the Dyke, a broad ditch that divided at this spot the two counties, Warwickshire and Worcestershire, two miles from the Manor. There were no hedges on either side the dyke, but a raised bank on this. Hugh, who was on in front, ran up it.

"Stay where you are," shouted Tod to him. "You can't come to grief to-day, you know, in that fine plumage."

For Hugh had a new purple velvet affair on. If I call it affair, it's because I don't know what else to call it; it was not a coat, and it was not a frock. He was seven; and yet Mrs. Todhetley dressed him like a girl; his short white drawers had frills to 'em; and this was made another grievance of by Tod. Hugh's bare legs were scratched all over; his white neck-frills got torn. He was a brave little fellow, full of spirit, fearing neither man nor ghost; a pretty-faced child, with large

blue eyes and long fair curls. For Tod to warn him against going to grief was something new, and I fancied he must be remembering that it was Christmas Day.

"I want to jump down, Joe," answered Hugh, from the top of the bank.

"You'd jump in. Stay where you are, I tell you, until I come."

Hugh came leaping down on this side, where there was no danger; the ditch, or dyke, was on the other. Tod ascended the bank and leaped it at once.

"Now then, Hugh, I'll catch you."

He stood on the edge of the dyke, ready to save Hugh, should his foot slip. The worst that would happen would be a wetting; but Tod meant to take care. Hugh leaped, and Tod caught him just as he was slipping backwards. How it happened I don't know, but the velvet got a tear in front. Such a rent!

"Whew!" cried Tod, with a whistle. "Madam will be brushing my jacket for that."

"I shan't say you did it, Joe," said Hugh, looking down ruefully. He had learnt to be fond of his fine clothes.

"Say it and welcome," returned Tod. My back's broad enough. Mind you walk sedately now, Hugh; if you get your foot through that hole, you'll have the whole bottom off."

We were near the house on our return, us two talking secrets together (it was only about Mrs. Todhetley, and Hugh racing around, when we suddenly missed him. Tod stood still and looked back.

"What went with him, Johnny?"

I could not say. We should not have minded either, but for the velvet. Hugh was safe anywhere on the land. Tod had told me to smuggle him up-stairs to the nursery, and get Hannah to mend the slit.

"Perhaps he turned off by the oak-walk, Tod. If so, he is already in-doors."

"The young monkey! And Madam is now groaning over the rent! Well, my back, as I say, is broad enough for that."

The Sterlings had arrived, and there was bustle in the drawing-room. Young Mrs. Sterling had brought her baby, a little bundle in a blue cloak; old Mr. and Mrs. Sterling were talking to the Pater, young Mrs. Sterling was nursing Lena, Mrs. Todhetley was admiring the baby, whose nurse stood at the door. Old Thomas came in to say that dinner was served. Hugh was nowhere to be seen.

"He's gone up to Hannah of his own accord, Tod," I whispered. And Tod just nodded in answer; as if not caring one way or the other.

They began to cross the hall, and the nurse took the baby up-stairs. Lena had hold of Tod then, for the children were to dine with us, and I was behind. Suddenly they stopped in a sort of commotion, and

there arose a hullabaloo that you might have heard over in Worcestershire.

Of all the miserable little objects possible for imagination to conceive, there stood the worst. It was Hugh, who had come bursting in at the hall-door with a great howl. He was green all over. The blood was pouring from his green face, his curls were dripping green slime, his legs and his purple velvet were nothing but green mud. As good explain at once that he had fallen into the duck-pond, and in scrambling out of it made his nose bleed. But it looked a great deal worse than that, and nobody could tell what to make of him. Mrs. Todhetley thought he was killed. She shrieked and sobbed, and gave Tod the accusation direct of being the author of the mischief. Tod denied it, his tone insolent.

"Look at his dress!" cried Hannah, who came flying down upon the scene. "Oh! ma'am, look at his beautiful dress! Can you deny doing that, sir?" she boldly asked Tod to his face, holding up the rent. She and Tod were always at daggers drawn.

"I did that," said Tod, distinctly. "That is, I caused him to do it."

A noise of a different sort, something like a man's passionate scream. It came from Tod, and I turned short round, frightened. The Pater had the horsewhip in his hand, laying it upon his shoulders. And he had never struck him since he was a child!

It was a wretched Christmas dinner; everybody in discomfort. Tod had bolted up-stairs to his room, and the Pater scarcely spoke to anybody. He was a little man, with a few light hairs sticking up on his head, and excruciating nerves. These scenes would put him into an awful passion for a moment, but it was soon over. As he sat there, making only a pretence to eat, I knew that he was wishing in his bitter repentance that his hand had been cut off before it was used on Tod.

"Johnny," he whispered to me, by-and-by, pretending to pick up his table-napkin, "go up to Joe, and tell him to come down and have some dinner. Tell him it's Christmas Day."

Up I went, three stairs at a time, wondering in what condition I should find Tod, and half afraid to enter. But Tod was not there. He had taken the matter coolly, Tod fashion, and I found him in the housekeeper's room, seated at a table which had been laid for him, a servant in attendance.

"Wants me to come in to-dinner, does he!" returned Tod, his mouth full of turkey. "My compliments to him, and I'm taking it here."

"Tod, I know he's as sorry as he can be. Do come! It's all so uncomfortable in there!"

"I'm glad to hear it!" answered Tod, emptying the tureen of bread-sauce on his plate.

"But won't you come?"

"Not if I know it. That senseless little reptile goes and flings himself into the green pond, and the Pater——"

"Hugh says he fell in, Tod."

"It's all the same. And the Pater horsewhips me for it! If I don't pay him off, my name is not Todhetley. Here, Johnny."

"How will you pay him off?" I asked, drinking the glass of champagne he held out.

"Leave that to me," said Tod, "I'll sleep upon it."

"I have told them it was not your fault, Tod. Hugh said so, too. He was coming in-doors by the fold-yard, and began chasing the ducks. That's how it happened."

"Awkward young donkey! But they shan't continue to blame me, right or wrong, for every scrape he falls into. That won't do, now it has come to a horsewhip. You may tell the Pater so."

"And you'll not come into the dining-room, Tod?"

"I've answered you once," said Tod, cutting himself a piece of pudding that must have weighed three pounds. "You needn't wait, Johnny." And back I went, after the unsuccessful negotiation.

Tod's feast transpired, and the Pater was vexed. What had made *him* intensely miserable, apparently only made Tod more jolly. Had he heard that his son was indulging grief or resentment in solitude, he would have gone and made friends with him—I know he would—perhaps have said he was sorry for his haste. As it was, he let the affair drop, saying nothing.

But the old Pater was not one to bear resentment; and he loved Tod, in spite of his faults, better than anybody else in the world. On the following morning, when we were going to the Jacobsons'—a three-mile drive—to spend the day and dine, he spoke pleasantly to Tod.

"Put on your warmest top-coat, Joe. We shall have a sharp frost to-night."

Mrs. Todhetley's toothache was worse, and her face swollen the size of two, so she would not come. Hugh's nose was all right this morning, and she wanted to send him with us. But the Pater would not have it: *he* was not going to look after him all day, he said, to keep him out of the Jacobsons' duck-ponds.

We left him, sobbing and roaring with the disappointment, and started; I, Tod, and the Pater. Tod generally sat in front when his step-mother did not, but he put me there to-day, and got up behind. No servant went with us to the Jacobsons'; old Blossom, their groom, would take care of the ponies.

The Pater was a kind man when not in a passion. "I can see you are wanting to drive, Johnny," he said. "Well, you may take the reins for a little while." I could drive as well as the Pater, at any rate in my own opinion, and we bowled along the frosty road, old Pater in his usual slow over the ponies.

"Look at them, Joe!" he rapturously said, leaning back to Tod. "Don't they step together!—are not the heads fine? And the tails! There's not such a pair of tails in the county," he went on. "And I caught old Giles saying he should like to shave them off! I'd rather he came in when I was asleep, and shaved my head!"

Whether the words suggested ideas to Tod, or whether what happened later—but I had better go straight on. The Pater had not finished his say.

"I wouldn't answer for it, Joe, that I shall not have to send Giles about his business. He gets more pig-headed every day. You may keep a servant too long. Now, then, Johnny, I'll take the reins. We are close there."

At the Jacobsons' we found a regular party. All of them went out to see Squire Todhetley's model ponies, and decided that they and their tails deserved to be photographed. About eighteen of us sat down to dinner at six. Old Sterling was one; and when the cloth was drawn, he told about Hugh's escapade, and what the Pater did with the whip. He meant it in joke, but he was an old fool for his pains. It put up Tod's blood awfully, and vexed the Pater, as I could see.

We did not sit so long as they did, and Tod got me round to the stables. "I want you there a minute, Johnny," he said. And I went, thinking nothing.

"I'm going to shave off their tails," he began, as he struck a light; and I laughed, supposing he was joking. But when I found he was in earnest, not jest, I nearly went out of my senses with fright; I almost went on my knees to him in the stable.

"Stow that!" said he. "All you've got to do is to hold the light. I shall never betray that you did as much as that, Johnny. Catch hold of the candle, and don't shake."

I always did what he told me: his was the master spirit: and I stood there, in the stable, lighting him, a very reed under his will. He had noticed a pair of large scissors, or shears, hanging there in the daytime. He said so as he took them down, when his preparations were made, and he proceeded to use them with right good will.

"We'll begin upon Punch first," said he, seizing the tail of the secured animal, and clipping off, at the first go, enough to stuff a pillow-case. "There's my beauty!" he chirped to the poor pony, with insidious flattery. "Punch shall have his tail trimmed, and make a fine show at the fair! Johnny, if you dodge the light about like that, I shall have an account to settle with you. Are you laughing or crying, sir? Handsome Punch! A little more yet. Was it fond of its tail, then, and didn't it like to lose it!"

"Oh, dear, what can the matter be?
Dear, dear, what can the matter be?
Oh, dear, what can the matter be?
He's got no tail for the fair!"

"Don't sing, Tod! Suppose they hear you?"

"Good Punch! Just a few more clips to make it perfect. We'll begin upon the mane next. Proud Punch! its tail shall be converted into a lady's chignon, and tied on with blue ribbons! Steady, Mr. Punch! be a gentleman, now! A little closer. You don't know how perfect an animal you'll be. Your own mother wouldn't know you!"

Perfect it was, but very bare. Had Tod served an apprenticeship to the art of tail-cutting, he could not have done it better. Toby's turn came next, but there was more trouble with him, and he could not be finished off so artistically. The manes escaped. Tod was beginning upon them when we heard a noise outside, so he just gave the nearest to him a good notch, and we prepared to decamp.

"Now, then, Johnny! Take down that apron of old Blossom's, and shove this horsehair in it as tight as you can. Make a ball of it, and pitch it into the pond. We must sacrifice the chignon. That's it!"

He blew out the light, and away we went. I flung the horsehair and apron into the pond, after which we got safe in-doors, and sat down to a round game at Pope Joan. Tod was going into fits of laughter perpetually, and the girls thought it was the cards that made him.

It was past twelve o'clock when we started home. The Pater had been boxed up in the dining-room, smoking with the old ones, and he looked half asleep. All of them were wanting their carriages together, and Tod ran out, telling Gruff Blossom he'd see to ours. Blossom thanked him: it stood to reason that he could not get about fifteen vehicles ready at once. So there was no difficulty in the matter. Tod harnessed the ponies to the carriage, and brought it round.

"You can drive, Joe," said the Pater, shaking hands with me, in mistake for somebody else; and he went fast asleep before we were clear of the Jacobsons' gates. Tod was silent all the way home, as if he did not like what he had done.

Success attended us. The Manor servants had been keeping up Christmas as well as ourselves, and Dwarf Giles was not in attendance to take the ponies. Three or four times in the year Giles would get too much to drink, and for twenty-four hours or so be no good to anybody. The Squire threatened to dismiss him every time, but never did it. Bill, the stable-boy, was there, and Tod and I went round with him.

"My eyes!" exclaimed Bill, when his lantern flashed on the ponies. "What's come to 'em?"

"Never you mind," answered Tod; "I suppose the Squire can do what he pleases with his own animals. The tails were getting too long." And that silenced Bill.

The Pater never came down the next day till twelve o'clock. The frost made him over-sleep himself, he said; and while he was breakfasting, Budd, the agent, came in. Tod was out of the way somewhere.

"I want to get over to Alcester to-day to the magistrates' meeting," said the Pater to Budd. "Ought to have started sooner, but the cold makes one sleep late. I'll drop you on the road, if you like, as you want to go towards Cookhill. It's a treat to sit behind those ponies of mine."

"So 'tis," answered Budd, tossing off a second glass of the ale brought in for him. "I never see foiner tails."

"Ah—h!" said the Pater, rubbing his hands at the compliment paid to the tails. "Johnny, go and tell Giles to get the chaise ready."

Giles was not about yet, but I and Bill did it, and he took the carriage round. I went under the pigeon-house, out of harm's way, and looked on.

Budd came out first, the Pater halting at the door to button his great-coat. Bill was at the ponies' heads, and the Pater caught sight of him. "Where's Giles?" he asked. Bill answered that he "was not in the way;" he did not dare to tell the master what was keeping him out of it.

"Why, Squire, what on earth have ye had done to 'em?"

It was Budd that spoke, pointing to the ponies, and it caused the Pater to step quickly to his side. He stood transfixed for a minute, staring like a stone statue, and then he burst into a noise that brought the house out.

"He has shaved their tails! He said he'd do it. I'll transport him!"

"Who?" asked Mr. Budd, staring alternately at the ponies and the Pater.

"Dwarf Giles."

The poor things stood shivering like human creatures. No wonder, with their fine warm tails gone! Mrs. Todhetley came out, Hugh and Lena came out, old Thomas came out, the empty ale-jug in one hand, the glass in the other; the women-servants put their heads out at the windows.

"Them there thick tails kep 'em warm," cried Budd,—about the worst thing he could have said. "'Twere like clothing to 'em, set aside the ornament they was."

"They are not our ponies, papa," cried Hugh.

Were they the ponies? The Pater rubbed his eyes as the doubt came over him. Had old Blossom harnessed the wrong ones to the chaise last night? Bill decided it.

"They be um, sir, sure enough. This un's Punch, and that un's Toby."

Stepping up all perky, as if to show he'd had nothing the matter with him, came Dwarf Giles. At first the Pater did not notice him: they were all crowding around. To watch Giles's face, when he saw the ponies, was better than a comedy: his mouth and eyes opened, and did not shut again.

"Lawk-a-mercy!" cried he at last, "who's a done it?"

"You have!" roared the Pater, pouncing upon him with outstretched arms. And then there was an uproar. Lena screamed, Hugh began to kick Dwarf Giles, Mrs. Todhetley interposed, the tears running down her swollen face. Tod might have heard the uproar, though he was as far as Alcester.

Giles cleared himself, but it took some minutes to do it. In the face of this great evil, he confessed to the lesser one—that he had made too free with the Christmas tap early the previous afternoon, and had been lying up in the tallet amidst the hay until now, as witness the bits sticking to his small-clothes. It "knocked him back'ards, it did, when he set eyes on the ponies, as the master might ha' seen."

The master had been a little calming down, sufficiently so to hear. Bill ventured a word as to the state of the animals when they came home the previous night, and everybody turned to him. I tried to wink at Bill to keep him quiet, but he could no more see me than if I'd been in the rain-water barrel.

"My heart bled for 'em, it did, to see 'em brought back without their tails," cried the boy, earnestly. "They was shorn right off, they was, just as they be now. When I asked what had done it, Mr. Joseph, he telled me to mind my own business, he did. He said the Squire found the tails was growing too long, and he'd a right, he had, to do what he would with his own animals."

"Mr. Joseph said that?" roared the Pater, turning himself upon Bill.

"Yes, he did, sir; which were as good as saying you clipped 'em with your own hands. Ask Master Johnny if he didn't—he were there."

Master Johnny had taken care not to be in the way of being asked. The Pater saw it all—Joe had clipped the ponies.

But I never thought—no, not in my worst fear—that he'd take it up as he did. Sending the ponies back to the stable, he went in-doors to write a warrant for his son's apprehension, and hurried off with it himself to Jones, the constable. We kept our constable still, and the police turned their backs upon him. The Squire and his tenant-farmers thought it would be time enough to patronize the police when old Jones should be superannuated.

"You'll take him, Jones, dead or alive!" foamed the Pater, his passion having increased with the heat of walking. "Apprehend him just as you would a common felon, and put the handcuffs on him. I'll prosecute him for this work!"

Jones hid the handcuffs in his pocket, and started, his constable's staff in hand, and his mouth full of cold rabbit, for the Squire would not let him wait to finish his dinner. Of course the difficulty was, where to find Tod. I was behind the hedge, and saw and heard all this; and I went off on the search another way.

It was getting towards sunset, and I had been looking about for hours when I came upon them. I wish some artist-fellow had been there to photograph the scene. Tod was on the Worcestershire side of the dyke, and the constable on the other, and Tod was driving him wild.

Jones had fat legs, as if the gout had settled in them, and no breath to speak of. He wore that day brown corduroy smalls, and white ribbed stockings; the Squire had not allowed him time to put his gaiters on. Tod was young, and fleet as a deer. He made short inroads on the other's territory, stood meek as a lamb in the slanting sun, until Jones puffed up to within a yard of him, and then turned and leaped the ditch again, leaving Jones screaming with the aggravation. The old chap could have managed to get over the dyke, but on the other side he had no power.

"Howling is of no use, old Jones. Why don't you come over and take me? You've got your warrant, you know; you've got your staff; you've got your handcuffs. I'll stand stock still, and let you take me here, if you dare. Is that you, Johnny?—come to see the fun? Jones thinks he'd rather not take me over here. Now, then, Mr. Jones! why don't you leap the ditch? Shall I assist you down? *Can't* you? Wouldn't the law let you? Oh, that's it—is it? I'm in Worcestershire, and your warrant is for Warwickshire. Ho, ho, ho! Good old Jones!"

To see the way Tod danced about in the face of the constable as he said this—the most aggravating dance conceivable! To see the old chap's insane gestures, and his poor fat legs trying to dance too! Oh, it was good! Refreshing one's spirits after that scene of anger earlier.

They kept it up till dusk. And then old Jones, with the staff and the handcuffs, went, carrying back his rage to the Manor. I stayed there with Tod, on the safe side of the boundary, telling him how the discovery had come, as we walked about to keep ourselves warm. Tod laughed himself hoarse at the relation.

Down came the snow, a sharp, blinding shower of it. Under its safe cover, Tod stole home, I acting as pioneer, with my eyes on all sides. He got in through the dairy-window, and so up to his bed-room, not a soul seeing him; and I smuggled him up some bread and cheese and beer. The constable was taking a good meal in the kitchen, enchainning all the servants with the account of Master Joe's wicked doings. Tod sent me for some more beer, and Mrs. Todhetley pounced upon me as I was creeping down the staircase.

"You must come in and have some dinner, Johnny," she said. "Mr. Todhetley is not angry with you; he knows you'd not dare to do anything of the sort. Where have you been all day? You must be half starved."

The Pater helped me to a jolly good serving of beef; he saw I looked

frightened; and Mrs. Todhetley gave me two great slices of plum-pudding.

"What do you know about the business, Johnny?" asked the Pater, while I was eating the pudding, his tone a kind one.

"Nothing," I answered, shivering inwardly. "And, if you please, sir," desperation gave me courage to say, "I couldn't have told of Joe, if I had."

The storm got worse as the evening went on. The wind howled, the snow came drifting against the dining-room windows. Generally the Pater went to sleep after dinner, but he was wide awake now. Hugh and Lena had gone to bed; Mrs. Todhetley was mending socks. Every now and then the Pater would walk to the window, draw aside the blind, and look out.

"I wonder where that young scamp, Joe, is?" he suddenly said, at about the sixth look. "One wouldn't wish a dog to be out such a night as this."

"Oh, Mr. Todhetley, won't you forgive him?" exclaimed my step-mother, the tears rising to her eyes. "He may be freezing to death in the snow."

"Serve him right!" growled Mr. Todhetley.

"No, no! Poor boy! you know, sir, you never did strike him before. And it was Christmas Day; and he was not in fault, after all."

Mr. Todhetley seized the poker, and drove it into the grate with such force that the live coals came flying out. Evidently he was vexed with somebody or other, unless it was himself.

"Suppose he should go and enlist for a soldier!" continued Mrs. Todhetley, who was sure to look on the worst side of things. "You know he threatened it once."

"Not he!" said the Pater, sending down the poker with a noise.

"Perhaps he's lying under some hedge for shelter—that high one beyond the dyke; or in the dyke itself. If sleep overtakes him he'll be frozen to death before morning."

Mr. Todhetley started up. "I think I'll go and look after him."

"Not you," she said; "let Johnny go. You won't mind it, will you, Johnny? Try and find poor Joe; and tell him—tell him" (looking at the Pater) "that his papa will forgive him."

"May I tell it him, sir?"

"Nonsense, Johnny!" said the Squire, putting on as gruff a tone as old Blossom's. "You can't find him."

"I think I could, sir."

"You young rascal, you know where he is! Tell me, this instant!"

"I'll tell you, sir, if you'll promise to forgive him."

"Forgive him for making crying sights of my ponies!" returned the Pater; "and me the laughing-stock of all Warwickshire! I'd rather be

seen behind a couple of mules. Go and look at the poor docked wretches."

"Their tails will grow again, sir," I pleaded, not in the least knowing whether they would or not. "Joe says that the feel of his father's whip will never wear off his back. He'd not have minded it from anybody else."

The Squire swallowed something in his throat. "Well, well; I'll not have him taken up, and I won't beat him. There, go and bring him home, Johnny."

"You can come too, please."

We went up-stairs in a body, the three of us. Tod was asleep. He lay with one arm outside the bed-clothes, and the shirt-sleeve had been pushed up to the shoulder, showing some blue wheals—those left on it on Christmas Day. Mrs. Todhetley quickly drew the sleeve down, and put the arm gently inside the bed.

"Poor Joe! don't wake him," said the Squire, in a soft voice. "But I must have a talk with him to-morrow. He can't expect to shave off ponies' tails, and not get told of it." And we went down-stairs again.

"It was all through the missis," I said to Tod when he awoke, respectfully alluding to Mrs. Todhetley. "But for her the Pater would not have come to. She wants to be kind to you, Tod."

"Madam shams," returned Tod. "I say, Johnny, though, I'd give my next quarter's allowance to be able to undo it. I dreamt just now that the Pater was dying, and that that precious gander of a Duff came in with his cane and his long face, and said the ponies' tails had killed him."

There's no more room. I'll tell something else about Tod another time.

JOHNNY LUDLOW.



THE KNIGHT OF THE TROWEL.

A TRUE IRISH SKETCH.

NEAR to our paternal home, in one of the eastern counties of Ulster, there dwelt, until recently, an odd old character, a stonemason, whose biography we are about to record. He rejoiced in the rather singular cognomen of Robin Curlew, but with the name all affinity between Robin and his feathered namesake ceased to exist. The one was as famous among the birds with whom he flocked for his social and familiar habits, and the deep, guttural tones of his voice, as the other is for his retired and lonely disposition, and his clear wild whistle, heard far in the murky clouds, above the roar and turmoil of the surging ocean, or along the pebbly precincts of its sounding shores.

For years Robin and his old spouse—another curiosity in her way—occupied a small thatched cottage in our immediate neighbourhood. It was remarkable for its imperfect roof, damp floor, and meagre plenishing, and for possessing a large old fire-fixtue, which extended out over the middle of the floor, like a canopy over the hearth. To call this same hearth a glowing one were but sarcastic mockery, seeing it rarely got the wherewithal to glow.

For certain poor and economical reasons, Robin's firing was of a very scant, precarious quality—an odd load of turf now and then, not to be rashly or carelessly used up, brambles and sticks gathered with toil and to be used with care and discretion, and sods, *scraws* and *furze*, familiarly called *whins*, cut from the neighbouring braes and ditches, formed his varied but fluctuating supply of fuel. Here we may remark, en passant, that the latter items, the *scraws* and *whins*, if they did not fill the house with heat, were eminently calculated to fill it with smoke; a pungent smoke, which drew quick tears from sorrowless eyes, as was the case with ourselves one day when calling to inquire after the state of Margaret's health, which we heard had been ailing. So dense was the stour that prevailed, that it was some time before we could discern the king and queen of the castle. At length we saw them looming up mysteriously through the gloom, like a terrible old picture of Samuel and the Witch of Endor, in grandfather's old Bible, and which used to have a strange and horrible fascination for our infantile imagination. On becoming still more used to the atmosphere, we descried Robin sitting at one side of the fire (?), and Margaret at the other. The latter we found, according to her own report; "very poorly entirely, altogether

tossificated and gone to ruination, with a pain under the spoon of her breast." Moreover, she had a cough and a wheeze, and these latter symptoms she stated with profuse illustrations in a series of short, deep barks. In these the smoke compelled us to join, as it also compelled us to make frequent and liberal use of our cambric; and poor Margaret, never discerning the just source of our tears, nor questioning but they flowed for her, and the coughs, and the wheezes, and the pain beneath that extraordinary instrument unknown to medical science—viz., the "spoon of her breast," called down a thousand blessings on our sympathetic heart, and our eyes, that had the love-light (not the smoke) in them.

In the private opinion of Robin, Margaret's mental calibre was none of the best; and in the private opinion of Margaret, Robin was little else than a fool; and in the public opinion of their neighbours their private opinions were considered correct. Margaret was indeed a very stupid old woman; and there was a brightness in Robin's eyes sometimes, and a grotesqueness in his speech and behaviour, which almost amounted to insanity. His ideas on the subject of man's supremacy would have nearly equalled a Turk's. He evidently never questioned but that Margaret and he were one, and that he was that one. To say the truth, he had but little difficulty in maintaining his supremacy over Margaret, for she was, as he was wont to describe her, with his usual inaccuracy of Scriptural quotations, "a woman living in a state like to our first parents, of neither good nor evil." Once, when she showed strong symptoms of temper and disobedience, he intimated to her, with cunning irony, that she was come of ancient descent, her pedigree dating back in direct line as far as that archangel who was cast out of heaven long ago for certain disobedient and presumptuous reasons.

On state occasions Robin was wont to lend extra dignity and solemnity to his language, by clothing it in a kind of scriptural phraseology; he further imparted weight and importance to his words by uttering them in a solemn sepulchral voice. These oral peculiarities, accompanied by huge grimaces and gestures, and a countenance grave as a solemn rook's, and as rarely moved to laughter, invested him with an air of mystery and peculiarity altogether indescribable to any save those who knew him. Robin, as he himself would express it, was "nayther a say-farin man nor a way-farin man." All his days had been spent in the same quiet district, his hands and eyes stuck in stone-walls and mortar, building up broken-down walls and putting up new ones, amongst the people who knew him from a boy—and more was the pity, in his opinion, and irreparable loss to society; for his real vocation, he believed, would have led him to the building up of the broken-down walls of Jerusalem. By this he meant not the veritable Jerusalem, nor the figurative gathering and cementing of the Jews of other lands, but simply preaching to the poor benighted Irish at home, in the south and

west, who "worshipped the scarlet lady and had the mark of the baste on their foreheads." Robin, however, could never convince anyone, save himself, of his peculiar fitness for this work; so he was fain to content himself by carrying on a guerilla warfare against "Her that sits upon the seven hills," with such of her followers as he came into ordinary contact with, and who were no wise averse to discussion with one so *outré*, amusing, and well-intentioned as Robin. In the meantime he handled his hammer and trowel, built up literal broken-down walls and erected new ones, and lived and died without seeing "foreign parts," or "far lands," or, indeed, anything greater or grander, more distant or important, than the chief town of his native county. Guess, then, with what interest and amaze he looked upon that wonderful miracle of modern swiftness and power, the train. The first time it came rushing along on its new line of rails through our district, Robin was leaning over the battlements of one of its bridges, with a young gentleman friend of ours, to watch its approach.

"What do you think of it, Robin?" inquired the latter, as it dashed past, with an eagle-like scream, glistening and shining in its glory and might.

"What do I think of it?" cried Robin, profoundly. "Eh, sir, what do I think? It swelleth with pride, it looks like a turkey-cock, it comes in a minute, and it's gone with a rush."

"What is it like, Robin?"

"What is it like, sir? Eh, what is it like? Now, faith, I don't know," and fairly puzzled, Robin gave a great gasp, and rolled his eyes all round the horizon in quest of something to which he might liken it. At length, bringing them down on his young master, with a huge grimace, he exclaimed, in his most solemn sepulchral voice, as if speaking from profound personal knowledge and conviction: "It's like the Deil runnin' bare-headed."

Robin was a truly religious man so far as his lights went, and his "lights," poor fellow, as we have already hinted, were often clouded and wandering; still he was a man of simple faith and unbounded trust in Providence and the great God he served.

He delighted much to read in the Book, but his knowledge, although large, was irregular, and his interpretations were often as highly grotesque as they were inaccurate. Daniel he loved, and Revelation he loved, and the dark old Prophets. There was something in their mysterious allegories and magnificent allusions which charmed his own vague but profound ideas of the awful, and sublime, and poetical in nature, and in nature's God. The same fascination existed for him, too, in all the mysterious phenomena of thunder and lightning, and dark clouds and tempests, in which Robin reverently enveloped his Creator. When he listened to the organ playing in the parish church of a Sunday, he had strange visions of glory and happiness to come, and

the voices of the choristers were unto him as the voices of angels. One verse of that beautiful hymn, set to the tune "Walmer," made a grand impression on him, and he never after forgot it. It was this:—

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm."

Robin loved much to read about the Beginning, about that strange mysterious time when the earth was without form and void, and Adam was not, and Eve was not. "And would that she had never been!" Robin would add, with great vehemence, for he never could forgive her that little indiscretion about the apple. Poor Eve was no favourite of his, and in connection with her he held a curious idea about handsome women, for which those fair flowers of creation will scarcely thank him.

"Do you know why it was," he inquired of us one day, "that the devil tempted Eve in preference to Adam?"

"No, Robin," we replied, with profound solemnity; "what was it?"

"Well, it was this," replied Robin, thrusting his two thumbs through the two top button-holes of his old dress-coat, for Robin affected dress-coats. He called them *swallow-tails* sometimes, and sometimes *body-coats*, and certainly they were not *skirt-coats*, seeing they had no skirts to speak of. The shape was sufficiently unbecoming, the texture was coarse, and the complexion invariably blue, "profusely illustrated," as the publishers would say, with brass buttons. "It was this, then," proceeded Robin, having thrown himself into his favourite attitude for *speaking*: "the devil saw that Eve was fair and beautiful to look upon, so he just cast anchor upon her; and," continued Robin, with the air of an oracle, "from that day to this, beautiful women have been the devil's own instruments, and the particular objects of his malicious care!"

"Shame! shame! Robin!" we exclaimed, with enforced gravity; "we are amazed, we are shocked at you!"

"Nevertheless, you know it's the truth I'm sayin'. Isn't it a proverb, and I'm not sure but it's wrote down among Solomon's, that lovely women play the very mischief among the men?"

"Tut, tut, Robin!" we again exclaimed; "you have no Scripture for your statements, nor do we think a little beauty spoils the goodness of any woman. We dare say you yourself are, or were, an ardent admirer of it, and that you considered Margaret, in her day, well worth looking at."

"I'll not deny it," replied Robin, "but that Margaret had her faytures, naythur would I have taken her down of it." (We suppose not, indeed.) "Still, what I say is truth—the gospel truth—and I read an extract about it somewhere. It was wrote by a great man, a real clever fellow, that never spoke but he said something. I disremember his name, but it was something like Philander."

"*Menander*," we suggested.

"Yis, yis, dear; *Menander* it was, sure enough. (Och! what it is to have a head, and plenty in it!) Well, siz he, 'a good woman, and a butyful wan,' siz he, 'is the very exchequer of the virtues.' But," added Robin, slyly, "where are these exchequers to be found?"

"Oh! out upon you, Robin!" cried we, in affected displeasure. "In the name of the sex, we'll leave you. We wouldn't talk to such a man!"

"Stay, stay!" now cried he, in alarm at the idea of losing a respectable auditor, for Robin had that universal passion of the Irish peasantry, a passion for getting into genteel society, and "discoorsin' their betters,"—"holding sweet converse," Robin called it. "Let beauty play the weary as it likes (and does)," he added, "you and me'll not fall out, anyway. We have always been friends, have we not?"

"Oh! always, Robin," we replied, coming back.

"Shure we always have," said Robin, musingly. "Ever since the time when you used to come and write the letters for us to her as was far away across the say; and by the same token, how the old woman used to burst out and fill her apron with cries, when all was finished, and jist ready to fould up, to think how butyful and how affectionate her words looked on paper. 'Whisht, ye divil!' siz I to her, 'and don't make a behay of yourself. Shure, it's not your words at all at all, nor writin' nor inditin' ayther, that's doin' it;' but Margaret I always knew to be a woman void of understandin'. Och, but I say, d'ye mind the day that you kem up the road to our house, and you met me returnin' from Cootehill fair, whither I had gone to buy two small swine? I didn't get them, bekase I was too poor and they too dear for *my* money, and I was returnin' disappointed; but the evenin' was butyful—it was in the spring-time—and I rejoiced in the light of the sun and in the sweet *odeur* of the hawthorn, and in the aspect of the ditches covered with violets and wee wild blossoms, and the hills with their tender grass; and the time of the singin' of birds was come, and the voice of the thrushes and blackbirds was heard in the land, and I lifted up my soul in psalms and hymns, and repeated comfortable passages and grand texts to meself, and forgot all about bein' an hungered, and the small swine, and such mane affairs, and I walked the roads like any Christian man and gentleman; and then up you comes, and I feels more like a gentleman nor ever, for you turns and walks back with me, and, 'Robin,' siz you, 'there's a job at the house,' siz you, 'and you're wanted to do it.' 'Very well, then,' siz I, 'I'm yer man,' siz I, 'and a willin' one, too,' for I always liked to work at your house, bekase I was always trated shuparyor, and got liberties, and wasn't kept out like another, and, in coorse, I should'nt ayther, seein' the long friendship and respect and trust as was between the master and me."

If Robin had one weakness greater than another, it was for delivering

oratorical orations, accompanied by much gesture and grimace, and other elocutionary airs and graces unknown to all orators save Robin himself. Often, when his work for the day was done, and presuming on his privileged condition, he came to warm and rest him amongst the servants in the kitchen, the spirit of preaching would come mightily upon him, and, seizing his chair and converting it into an impromptu pulpit, he would deliver himself of what he was pleased to designate "a strong compound of doctrine," exhorting his rural hearers to alter their ways and be wise, to improve what gifts they had, and not to hide their *talons* in the earth, like the unjust servant, who met with a proper reward for his doings.

Not unfrequently he numbered us, an amused and unseen auditor, amongst his attentive hearers, as, stationed in the back passage or pantry, we listened in the spirit of the rest, we fear, which was more to catch his eccentric ideas, grotesque gesticulations, and *outré* expressions, than for the hope of any spiritual benefit to be derived from his rough, wandering, and often incoherent declamations.

Next to preaching himself, Robin dearly loved preachers and preachings, and, in search of a man to his mind, had visited in succession all the Church of England and Presbyterian places of worship in the neighbourhood. To two of the latter he most inclined, on account of their near proximity to himself and to each other. The one he designated the Big House, and the other the Little House. The congregation of the latter was a top swarm from the former, founded at a time when its capacious progenitor had of hearers enough and to spare; but that was at a time prior to the famine, and before the tide of emigration, which has since thinned so many households as well as churches, had set in in full force.

By reason of its priority, respectability, and influence, as well as early associations, Robin lent the light of his countenance to the Big House. Its minister he considered to be a truly good man—a doer of good deeds and a speaker of good words; but whether it was his manner of delivering the "good words," or Robin's manner of receiving them, he could not take up what the other laid down: in other words, as he was wont to explain, he "couldn't catch it."

Now, in the hope of "catching it," he left the Big House and went over to the Little one, where he found a man, tall and comely, of a pleasant aspect, fair complexioned, and fair spoken. But his utterances were too rapid for Robin's comprehension; he poured out his sentences in "a tumultuous quantity of words," which Robin further likened to the "pouring of gravel out of a cart."

Still unable to *catch it*, Robin moved down under the ministry of another clergyman—a man but a little less odd than Robin himself, and looked upon in his parts as a downright curiosity. Under his preaching Robin sat for some time on Sundays, and on his premises he worked through the week. The clergyman was reputed rich; he had a hand-

some house and grounds, and extensive office-houses, in the building and repairing of which Robin, for a considerable time, found ample employment. At last he left him, and the cause of separation was this. There came on a dreadfully wet harvest, and all the crops lay prostrate, bleak and dripping, under the frowning skies. Day after day rose cheerless and weeping. Night after night set in darkness and rain, and the hearts of the farmers died within them, and the gentry looked out from their drawing-room windows upon the dreary waste, and sighed.

At length there came one beautiful morning, and the sun walked forth blithely, and smiled on the world; and the skies looked as soft and as radiant as though they never had frowned; and all Nature rejoiced and grew glad—but the morning was Sunday! Now, as Robin's master was hastening to preach, he espied Robin hastening after to hear him, and turning round, he said, "Robin, you must go back. Stay you at home, and stack up the oats that fell in the rain last week, or it will surely be lost."

"Oh, sir!" replied Robin; "it's not God's work."

"No, but it's yours!"

"No, but it's not," retorted Robin, "for it's a sin!"

"It is no sin," replied the other, petulantly. "It is a work of necessity."

"The race is not to the swift," cried Robin. "Take your time, and all will come right."

"All will *not* come right," replied the little white-neck-tied sinner. "All couldn't come right if it rains more, and that you know very well."

"The Lord has said," rejoined poor Robin, reverently, "that while the world lasts there will be seed-time and harvest."

"Ay," cried the other, "but he didn't say *what kind of a harvest*."

"Now," replied Robin, in his most solemn and sepulchral voice, "I perceive you to be no man of God; so here we shall part."

And, true to his word, he did part; and "lifting up his tent," with Margaret (not Sarah) typically within, he moved up hitherward once more, and pitched again in our immediate neighbourhood. During the winter he found no inconvenience from the change, for he had plenty to do; but in the spring-time came hurry and bustle among the farmers, and there was no time for attending to mason-work. So poor Robin, much against his will, was fain to throw down his hammer and trowel, and take up his spade and shovel, and work in the spring fields.

The farmer he unluckily entered with, Robin quickly discovered to be what he called "an austere man, without any bowels of mercy." And this was the truth, for he was a hard, greedy man, such as there are many of amongst the small industrious farmers of the north of Ireland—men who carry their pushing and laudable endeavours for independence somewhat too far, and are characterised by a narrowness, if not positive

meanness, in all their money transactions and bargains—their matrimonial bargains most of all ; and by an over-greed and thrift in the working of their farms, which is as far from meeting with our sympathy or approval as it was with that of our poor friend and philosopher, Robin. In this particular instance he “suffered grievously in the flesh because of the unlawful grippin’ of this man Nabal.”

Up early and down late, there was not much idle bread eaten on his farm ; and as for anything in the way of hospitality—he was the sort of man who, as Robin would describe, with that cutting hyperbole peculiar to the Irish peasant, “if he had but a potato, he would give you the skin.” There was not much, as may be surmised, of the poetic or contemplative in his hard nature. He wanted his work done, and his crops put in, and he was determined that Robin should follow his harrow, and shovel up his corn-furrows with as few straightenings of the back or idle contemplative pauses as possible. Robin, on his part, felt seriously aggrieved, and likening himself to the oppressed Israelites, he intimated to his employer that he was an Egyptian task-master. To all these remonstrances, however, the man of greed “turned his ear like the deaf adder,” and whipped up his horses, and hurried on with his work, and kept a sharp eye on “the hands,” whilst one of them—Robin, to wit—groaned audibly, and longed for “a job at the master’s.”

Things were in this state one splendid spring evening—“every man with his nose to the ground, and not the laste spirit in one of them,” and Robin, with all a tradesman’s dislike to any pursuit save his own, shovelling up his ridge with a mingled expression of scorn and endurance—when suddenly they were arrested by a great wailing, and then they saw the man’s wife hurrying across the field towards him, in almost a state of distraction. She came to tell, with great hysterical sobs, coming right from her mother’s heart, poor thing ! how that their last born, a child of four years of age, had been down by the lake side, playing with pebbles, and coming up through the marshes had toppled into a bog-hole ; and a neighbour, seeing it from an opposite hill, had rushed down, and pulled it out, and fetched it home, and there it was lying dead in the room, but not cold. So the father had to leave his horses and harrow, and Robin of slow and indolent propensities, and hasten into the house, to apply warm water and blankets, and all the other simple and approved remedies within reach to restore suspended life and respiration.

In the meantime Robin, leaning on the top of his shovel, gave himself up to complacently contemplating the direct interposition of Providence in this matter, in punishing his avaricious employer ; for, as he would ever after relate, with smug self-satisfaction, “The man of greed had to undress in the midst of all his hurry, and go to bed that splendid spring evening, to lie with the child, and *bring back its spirit that had departed.*” Evidently without knowing it, Robin had changed the

character and powers of his hated Nabal into those of one of his grand old wonder-working prophets, Elisha.

There is just one other incident connected with Robin which we would like to record.

In the private opinion of Robin, his teeth meant to ache until, like the "Kilkenny cats, they had fought till naught but their tails were left."

Two of these "tails," or stumps rather, he got drawn on a memorable occasion by his chief friend and patron, Dr. M——, a gentleman whose talents and goodness he held in profound admiration, never referring to his favourite practitioner with any other than his choicest term—"a most comfortable gentleman." Nevertheless, the extracting of the teeth was not "comfortable;" and another—"the biggest and baddest of them all"—becoming troublesome afterwards, Robin resolved to let it alone, and fight it out as it liked.

Fight it certainly did, and that with such tyrannical assiduity that for three weeks in the early spring it rarely permitted poor Robin to enjoy one meal with impunity or one unbroken night's rest. Indeed, it was at night that he suffered most acutely, for, according to the ungenerous and vindictive nature of tooth-ache, the moment it got his head down on the pillow, it ran successively through the whole category of its refined modes of torture—its gnawings, corkscrewings, twitchings, and stoonings. At length, thoroughly outraged and driven to despair, he bounced up, and poking his old spouse in the side, with profound deliberation and solemnity he thus addressed her:—

"Margaret, arise and dress yourself, for I'm about to depart!"

Margaret, at once waking up to a lively sense of the inexpediency of this proposal, exclaimed, "Oh! Robin, dear, you must not die, for if you die, how would I live? I'd starve, so die you shan't!"

"Woman!" replied Robin, sitting bolt upright, his large grey eyes rolling, his hair, stiff, sparse, and sooty as a chimney-sweeper's patent brusher, now thrice stiff, sparse, and sooty. "Woman, it is in vain for you to insist further; nor do I think you show much feelin' in doing so. Heaven may provide for you as best it likes; as for me, I will struggle with this mine adversary no longer!" So saying, he leaned back and shut his eyes, not in death, we are happy to say, but in sleep, for Nature—kind Nature—ever wise, beneficent, and gentle, sent her balmy gift, and for hours rested the worn-out faculties of the poor old man, who, on awaking, found, to his great joy, that his "Adversary" had actually departed; and, as he often told us afterwards, with one of his most striking gestures and very best grimaces, "that was the last he ever *saw* of him," for as old age advanced, the tooth fell out piecemeal, and he never felt it more.

THE MILLER'S REVENGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "FOOLISH MARGARET."

IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.

"**D**OWN on the floor, vile thief! You and I must become better acquainted."

"The terrible pistol was still pointed in a line with her eyes, and she was fain to obey the command of him who held it. With another cry for mercy, fainter than the first one, she slid from the sacks to the ground, and crouched there in mortal terror.

"So, so, Mère Babet, this is your fashion of getting an honest living, is it?" sneered Lebrun.

"Mercy! have mercy!" was all that the miserable creature at his feet had power to say.

"Oh! yes, I'll be merciful, never fear. Merciful, that is, after a fashion of my own."

"With that, Lebrun laid down his pistol, as though he could have no further use for it against an object so contemptible, and turned to light a couple of candles, that were fixed in a wooden frame close by. Hardly was his back turned, when Mère Babet gave a sudden spring, and before Lebrun knew what had happened, the pistol was in her hands. As he turned, she fired. The flash nearly blinded him for the moment, and the bullet seemed to skim his hair as it whizzed past, but beyond that he was unharmed. Next moment his hand was driven with the force of a hammer into the woman's face, and she fell to the floor bleeding and insensible.

"La Mère Babet was a well-known character on the island. Indeed, she was better known than liked. There was scarcely a house of the humbler sort between Noirmont Point and Gorey, the threshold of which she was not in the habit of crossing at least once or twice during the summer months; while, in the kitchens of several of the gentry, she was a more frequent visitor than the heads of the household were at all aware of. For it was well known throughout the island, that if any one possessed the power of interpreting dreams, and of precasting future events, that person was Mère Babet. Besides which, she was said to be the recipient of gifts still more occult and dangerous than that of vaticination. For instance, it was well known that the power of blight and cursing lay with her in great force—the power of causing a man's crops to die off mysteriously, and without any apparent reason; of

causing his children to grow up rickety and deformed; of making all his bargains prove unprosperous, and his life a series of failures and mistakes. Granting her, then, to possess this power, were it not wise to disarm any possible ill-feeling, by showing her such little kindnesses and attentions as could make the poor no poorer, while they might, perchance, result as a blessing in some way not foreseen. For *Mère Babet* was easily propitiated: a meal of humble food now and then, whenever she happened to be passing your way; a word of kindly welcome, and, if you could afford it, a copper or two by way of a parting gift. Show your interest in her by these and such like kindnesses, and you might rest assured that, as far as her good wishes availed, the lines of your life would be laid in pleasant places.

"She was a very diminutive, shrivelled up old woman, and her age might range anywhere between sixty and a hundred. Granting her to be only the former age, although every one said she was much older, she was still preternaturally sprightly and active. There was a restless, galvanic sort of life about her, that seemed to set the usual infirmities of old age at defiance. Her hair was perfectly snow-white; while her thick projecting eyebrows still retained, either naturally or artificially, all the blackness of youth.

"It would perhaps be difficult to ascertain by what motives the old woman was influenced in acting as she did towards the miller of *La Roquette*. There might be some dim feeling of revenge at work in her heart, bred there by the contumely with which *Pierre Lebrun* had ventured on one or two occasions to treat her. And yet the method of her revenge, if revenge it were, was so paltry and utterly despicable, as to be quite unworthy of being dignified with so imposing a name. Necessity could not be pleaded as her excuse for the theft. She was never in absolute want. At any time she could have given a list of twenty houses, at any one of which a night's shelter and a plentiful supper and breakfast were at her command. It is possible that the theft of the flour was merely intended as the first of a series of petty annoyances; or she may have thought that a robbery so mysterious might touch the superstitious chord of *Lebrun's* nature, and that he might be more effectually worked upon through his fears than by any other means at her command. Unfortunately for her, her estimate of *Lebrun's* character was not quite correct; as a result of which mistake she was now in his power, and there was no one to deliver her out of his hands.

"When *Mère Babet* recovered her senses, an operation which was facilitated by a quantity of cold water which the miller threw over her, she found herself bound hand and foot with a thin cord, which *Lebrun* had wrapped round her again and again, till she was almost as powerless as a mummy to stir any part of her except her head. What was he going to do with her? Her frightened eyes stared the question

at him as he sat on a low stool opposite to her, waiting patiently for her recovery. He sat without speaking, waiting till her senses should be thoroughly restored. By that dim light the miller's face looked as hard, as cruel, and as utterly relentless as though it were the face of an Eastern idol in some temple by the 'sacred river.'

"At last he rose and stretched himself. 'You will do now for my purpose,' he said.

" 'Mercy !' murmured the woman, for the third time.

" 'If that's all you have to say, you may as well save your breath,' sneered Lebrun. Then, without another word, he took her up under his arm, as though she were a truss of straw; and opening the door, carried her into the little croft outside, and laid her on the grass. Then he went back into the mill and fetched another long piece of cord. The autumn morning, clear and chilly, was just breaking. The eastern sky was streaked with pencils of saffron light. Night's dark skirts still lingered in the west. The incoming tide was breaking in great showers of spray on the rocky teeth outside the bay, and beating, white-fringed and passionate, against the restraining sands, as though it were a prisoner beating its heart out against its prison bars.

"The huge wheel by which the machinery of the mill was set in motion worked in a deep stone trough, hollowed out of the ground, into which, after performing its office of turning the wheel, the water fell from above, and was carried away by some underground channel. The wheel itself was made of timber, strongly bolted and bound with iron.

"Lebrun's next action was to fetch the short ladder, by means of which Mère Babet had gained access to the mill. This he put down into the trough, so that its lower end rested on the broad tire of the mill-wheel. Then picking up Mère Babet, and holding the loose cord in his teeth, he cautiously descended the ladder, step by step, till he and his burden were safe at the bottom, standing inside the wheel on the green and slippery wood-work. With quick and nimble fingers, the miller next proceeded to tie the helpless woman to one of the huge spokes of the wheel. It was done quickly and well, and Lebrun nodded his head, and grinned sardonically at the excellence of his own handiwork. A low moan for mercy—always the same word—burst from Mère Babet's lips now and again. Otherwise she was silent. As soon as Lebrun had satisfied himself that it was impossible for his prisoner to escape, he deliberately remounted the ladder and drew it up after him. Then he paused and spoke. 'You thought to rob Pierre Lebrun, and not suffer for it! Vile thief! You will never rob again. Long before this morning's sun is half-way up the sky, the devil, to whom you belong, will have claimed his own again. Adieu, ma mère! Present to his highness the assurance of my distinguished consideration, and tell him that if he ever ventures this way, I will serve him as I am serving you. Adieu! adieu!'

"A minute later, and the water began to flow. Lebrun was opening the sluice. At first a thin, trickling stream, but fast increasing in rush and volume, till the whole force of the water at the miller's command was brought to bear on the wheel and its burden. First the wheel creaked, then it shivered—as though shrinking from the terrible duty laid upon it—and then, as the water struck it more and more fiercely, it began slowly to revolve, and Mère Babet began to revolve with it. Tied firmly to one of the spokes, with her head pointing to the centre, and her feet touching the tire, as the wheel moved she moved with it, rising slowly, till her feet were in the air and her head downward; then coming slowly down on the other side. Never resting for a moment, never hurrying its pace, the wheel went round and round—a dripping monster that knew no weariness. But it was a monster that required constant feeding while it worked, and Pierre Lebrun was busy inside attending to its wants.

"'Work and play at the same time!' he muttered. 'It is not often that the two come together for a poor wretch like me. Oh! but it is sweet to be revenged!'

"He went out every few minutes to glance at his prisoner, and nodded his head, and rubbed his hands gleefully, to find how satisfactorily everything was progressing. The great wheel dripped and sparkled in the rays of the early sun, as the rushing stream smote it fiercely from above. La Mère Babet, rising and falling slowly, now lost in the depths of the trough, and anon coming up, up, up, only to swoop slowly down next moment, looked, except for her ghastly face, with its crown of white hair, and her wide-staring eyes, like a mere bundle of saturated clothes. Twice she had given utterance to a shriek, loud, agonized, far-reaching, that might well have frightened the sea-birds in their rocky haunts, and had caused even the miller's nut-brown cheek to pale for a moment. But that was half-an-hour ago, and many things might happen in that time. There was something dreadful about the woman's continued silence. Lebrun's visits to the little grassy hillock beside the trough became more frequent, and the scowl deepened on his face, as Mère Babet, with the devilish obstinacy of her sex, refused to speak, or even so much as to look at him. If she would only have shut those dreadful staring eyes for a moment! But even that seemed too much to expect. At length the death-like solitude became unbearable. 'Hallo! hallo! ma mère,' he cried. 'Are you asleep or awake? Has the water cooled your brain yet? Promise never to rob me again, and I'll set you free. Vile hag! why don't you speak? Speak! I say, or I'll keep you turning there till the day of judgment!'

"But la Mère Babet vouchsafed no answer. Not even by the flicker of an eyelid did she acknowledge that she heard what was said to her. The shrill scream of some wheeling sea-bird, the faint crowing of a cock on some distant farm, the heavy pulsing of the tide upon the shore, all

these could be heard above the fierce rush of the mill-stream—these, but nothing more. Lebrun stood silent for a few moments; then he shook his clenched fist at his victim, drove his hands deep down into his pockets, and went back indoors.

“An hour later, Gaspard came up with the horse and cart from Rozel. ‘Good morning, my uncle. Have you succeeded in catching the thief?’ he said, as he entered the mill.

“The miller nodded without speaking. Then taking his nephew by the sleeve, he drew him outside, and pointed to the still revolving wheel and its ghastly bundle of poor, dead humanity. ‘Behold, how Pierre Lebrun revenges himself on those who do him an injury!’ he said. ‘We must hide this thing; and thou, my nephew, must keep a still tongue in thy head.’

“The two men looked steadily into each other’s eyes. This time it was Gaspard’s turn to nod his head, which he did in slow and significant assent to his uncle’s words. The wheel was at once stopped, and the cords cut. The body was hid away under some empty sacks till evening, and buried after dark in a deep hole in the garden at the back of the mill.

“That la Mère Babet would be missed from several of her usual haunts, and her absence commented on, can hardly be doubted; but no active inquiry or search was ever made into her fate. Such a task was nobody’s business—at least, the business of no private person—and the case was one that was never brought under the cognizance of justice. The old woman had been a vagrant and a wanderer for years; intercourse between people living at different parts of the island was by no means so common then as now; it was quite possible that la mère might have died and been buried in some little hamlet, and her friends, four or five miles away, be utterly unaware of the fact. So, as month after month went past, and the old woman was missed from her customary rounds, people could only shrug their shoulders, and suppose they should never see her again in this world, and hope that her wandering feet had found rest at last.

“At the mill of La Roquette matters went on, to all outward seeming, exactly as they had done for the last dozen years. The mill-wheel went round, and the miller and his nephew did their work after the same thorough fashion for which they had been so long noted; with the same disinclination for useless speech, and the same hard, grasping way in money matters. To their customers, there was no change visible in the old man or the young one; but, by-and-by, as autumn waned into the long mirk nights of winter, Gaspard began to note a change in his uncle, which troubled his sluggish mind more than anything had troubled it for years. It was a change that deepened with the deepening year, but that grew no lighter as the days crept out again; seeming, indeed, to lie a more unnatural burden on the souls of both the men when

leafy spring had come round once more, and all the island was red and white with blossom. With wrongdoers it should ever be wintry weather.

"The change in Lebrun was marked by an increased moroseness and taciturnity of demeanour; by a growing habit of secret dram-drinking; and by a reluctance to venturing anywhere out of the warm-lighted kitchen after dark. He would talk, too, in his sleep, and mutter strange things, that made Gaspard's blood run cold to hear. He never drank during the day, and always attended well to business; but as soon as the afternoon began to darken, he would creep away, without saying a word to Gaspard, to a little corner cupboard where he kept his accounts and books, such as they were, and would drink deeply of the cognac that was always there ready to his hand. Then, as the evening advanced, he would visit the cupboard again, and yet again; and in the middle of the night Gaspard often heard him with the bottle at his lips. Sometimes, when he was in his worse moods, he would, greatly to Gaspard's horror, re-enact his part of the ghastly drama in which la Mère Babet had been the unhappy victim; but, in Lebrun's waking moments, the murdered woman's name was never mentioned between him and his nephew.

"Twelve months came and went, and brought the first anniversary of the tragedy of La Roquette. Gaspard had business down in St. Helier that day; but Lebrun, without assigning any reason, commanded that it should be put off till the morrow. All the day he seemed in a very restless and uneasy mood, and unable to settle to any one task for long at a time; neither did he wait as usual till afternoon before having recourse to his friend in the cupboard. When the day's work was over, and night really came, Gaspard was astounded to see his uncle light three candles in place of the one poor dip which had always hitherto been sufficient for their needs; and for the first time he made no secret of his drinking. They were early-goers to bed at the mill, and when the fingers of the clock pointed to their ordinary hour for retiring, Gaspard would have gone as usual. But his uncle stopped him. 'I cannot sleep to-night,' he said. 'Thou must stay, my child, and keep me company.'

"So Gaspard stayed, and the night went on. Outside there was a strong wind blowing, and a deep-voiced sea rolling heavily in; but the sky was cloudless and bright with stars. There was a restlessness upon Lebrun, which drove him frequently to the outer door. He would open it for a space of a few inches, would seem to listen intently for a little while, would then close the door, sigh deeply, and resume his seat by the fire. When he had done this for the fifth or sixth time, Gaspard broke the long silence by asking, 'Whom, then, do you expect, my uncle? and why do you listen so often at the door?'

" 'I expect no one. I am listening to the voices; but I cannot tell clearly what they say.'

"'What voices, my uncle? I do not hear them.'

"'Then, old as I am, my ears are better than thine,' said Lebrun, contemptuously.

"Next time he went to the door Gaspard followed him.

"'Hist! There they are again. Canst thou not hear them?'

"'I can hear no voices save those of the wind and the tide,' answered Gaspard.

"'Go! Thou art dead asleep,' answered Lebrun, as he shut the door.

'The night is full of voices. Soon I shall know what it is they have to tell me.'

"As the night wore on, Gaspard, on his warm seat by the fire, was gradually overcome by sleep. He was awake by his uncle shaking him roughly by the shoulders, and on opening his eyes he saw that it was already daybreak. The door was wide open, and the inrush of the wind had put out the candles.

"'Awake, Gaspard! awake! There are not several voices this time, but one.'

"'Whose voice?' asked Gaspard, with a nameless dread creeping over him.

"'The voice of la Mère Babet. Canst thou not hear her calling?'

"'Pierre Lebrun—Pierre Lebrun,' she says, 'I want thee. Come!'"

"'I hear nothing but the wind and the sea. It is all a bad dream, my uncle,' answered the white-faced Gaspard.

"'Fool! I tell thee she is calling me. She has a great secret to reveal, and I dare not refuse to go.'

"Without waiting for an answer he left the house, and went off towards the stable. Gaspard, nerveless for once in his life, and shivering with fright and cold, stood leaning against the door-post, and looking out into the gray, chill dawn. Presently Lebrun appeared, leading his old horse by the bridle. 'You are not going away, my uncle!' pleaded Gaspard; 'you are not——'

"'Hark! La Mère Babet calls me again,' interrupted Lebrun. 'I come! I come!' he cried aloud; and, almost before Gaspard knew what had happened, his uncle had scrambled on to the mare's back, and was riding at a sharp pace down the hill, his white hair, uncovered, fluttering in the wind. At the bottom of the hill he turned, and waved his hand to Gaspard, and then set his horse to breast the sweep of moorland that formed the opposite side of the valley.

"Gaspard, like one in a dream, stood watching him. What if la Mère Babet had really called his uncle? Might it not be his turn to be called next? His heart seemed to be nipped in a vice as this thought crossed his brain, but still he kept his straining eyes fixed on Lebrun. Gradually the feeling of fear on his own account was lost in one of wonder as to what his uncle's ultimate intentions could be. He watched the horse and its rider slowly mount the opposite hill-side to the summit

was reached, and a wide stretch of undulating moorland lay before them. Across this they now began to speed at a headlong pace, and in a line as straight as the flight of an arrow. 'Great heaven!' murmured Gaspard, 'does not my uncle know whither he is going? Three minutes more, and he will be over the precipice!'

"He tried to shout, but his voice was blown away in the opposite direction. He could do nothing but stand, with white face and bated breath, waiting for what might happen next. He could see Lebrun with hand and foot urging his horse madly on; he could see the space between them and the precipice rapidly lessening; he could see the miller wave his arm now and again, as if in answer to his ghostly summoner: he could see all this, and yet he was utterly powerless to avert the catastrophe which he knew that a few seconds more must bring about before his very eyes.

"The horror upon him was fast deepening, but he could not turn his eyes away for a single second. Nearer and still nearer to the fatal precipice! Gaspard's breath came more thickly. Lebrun's arms were working violently, as he urged his horse to still greater speed. The last few yards of turf seemed to fly from under them. A wild leap out into space, a clenched hand flung up for one brief instant, and then horse and rider were gone! The rocks, a hundred feet below, caught them on their sharp teeth; the wild waves seized upon them and carried them away, to make ghastly playthings of them for a few days, and then to toss them up contemptuously on some far-away strand.

"That very day Gaspard went down to St. Helier, to the office of the Chief Constable, and made a clean breast of the whole affair. The body of la Mère Babet received decent burial in consecrated ground; but from that day to this the Mill of La Roquette has never found a tenant."



OLD-NEW JOKES.

BY DR. DORAN, F.S.A.,

Author of "Their Majesties' Servants," "Table Traits," &c.

"THERE is nothing new under the sun," and that well-used remark was, probably, itself without novelty when it became part of the chronicle from which we derive it. There *is* nothing new under the sun, not even our jokes, nor our fairy stories, nor our legends. They all come to us, more or less, from the East. The story of Amphitryon, of Jupiter, and Alemena is the variation of an old Hindoo romance, which tells how a deity of the dynasties before Olympus put on mortal shape, and, assuming the outward appearance of a warrior-chief, who was engaged in battle far away from home, entered the absentee's household as its lawful lord, and passed off the mistress of the house as his lawful lady. In either legend, the true master, when he descends in his proper person within his own circle, and finds who has usurped his authority there, expresses his most grateful sense of the honour which has been conferred upon him.

And then, "little children," do not lay the flattering unction to your young imaginations that Cinderella was invented in these later days, for your especial delight. The story of the little maid and her glass slipper is, literally, as old as the Pyramids. The author who charmed our childhood with the exquisite legend beginning with "Once upon a time," had no idea that the time referred to the period when Egypt told the hour by her water-clocks. When Rossini set "Una volta 'era un Re," and put in something more exquisite still to the text "Non più mesta," for Madame Colbran, just half a century ago, he had little idea that the real scene of the story lay, not in the old castle of Don Magnifico and the country seat of Don Ramiro, but on the banks of the Nile, before the first Rameses was King. The whole romance belongs to a lady called Rhodope, and she, the undoubtedly original Cinderella, lies buried, it is said, beneath the oldest of the Pyramids! This fact should be suggestive to summer tourists in search of an object.

It is singular to find how soon stories became old, even in early times. Even the exclamation of "Joe Miller!" to indicate a venerable joke, is as old in sense, if not in sound, as the days of the father of Alexander the Great. When Philip was the Macedonian king, there was a club of wits in Athens which met once a week, not in the tavern,

but the temple of Hercules. They had such a favourable opinion of their own powers, that they chronicled all their own jokes, and kings sent to borrow the book—"The Book of the Sixty," it was called, from the number of the members,—when they were depressed by the turn of politics, or by their own humours, and stood in need of a laugh and its refreshing influences.

Very many "good things" must have been entered in this proto-jest book, though we do not know what they were. For a time they served the purpose of "diners-out," and of men who carried no wit about with them, save what was contained in their memory of the wit of others. The volume, however, became so familiar through its contents being circulated abroad, *vivâ voce*, that the hearers at last got weary of it, and whenever a dull fellow sought to derive some brilliancy by repeating one of the oft-told stories, he was met by a general cry of "Come, that's an old Sixty!" And our best jokes are pretty well as old as the volume in question. For example, we ascribe to Theodore Hook the merit of mischievous originality in the "Berners Street Hoax," whereby he brought a thousand or two of people, besides horses and carriages, into one street, and making towards one house, at one and the same moment. Now, the honour of originality in this matter belongs to one Ciphisodorus, who advertised for thousands of day-labourers to repair to a certain street in Egypt, at a certain hour. This was enjoyed from a secure hiding-place all the "fun" he expected from witnessing the confusion in a narrow street caused by crowds of disappointed men fighting their way out against crowds of hopeful men fighting their way in.

There is scarcely a modern illustration of witty or humorous Irish simplicity which is not, *at least*, as old as the Platonic philosopher of Alexandria, Hierocles, who lived five centuries before the Christian era. At that early period men laughed at the simpleton who resolved never to go into the water till he had learned to swim; or at him who wished himself as speechless as the sick man from whom he could obtain no reply, in order that he might return the invalid's incivility; or at that other who attempted to keep his horse alive without food, and who failed just at the moment of success by the obstinate brute dying. Greeks laughed long before Irishmen at their respectively alleged fellow-countryman who carried a brick about as a sample of the house he had to sell. The Hibernian who shut his eyes before a looking-glass, ~~that~~ he might see how he looked when he was asleep; who bought a crow, to test the truth of the assertion that the bird lived a couple of centuries; who, in a shipwreck, clung to an anchor, to save himself from drowning; and who remarked to a friend who reasonably denied the asserted fact of his reported death, that the fact had been vouched for by one who was more worthy of credit than he who denied it,—that Hibernian is an old Greek in modern guise, and the Greek, as in the story of Amphitryon, is believed to be indebted to a Hindoo prede-

cessor, who may, probably, turn and "*Chin, chin!*" to the original inventor of the story in Pekin!

Although most of the ancient Greek traits of simplicity have been transferred in modern times to Irishmen, the Scots have come in for a share, not only taking the joke, but naming a Scottish individual as the hero of it. One of the ancient stories in Hierocles is thus appropriated in the north:—"Duncan M'Girder wanted to use his mare, by degrees, to live without meat, and just as he had put her on a straw a day, the poor thing died."

This is the Hierocles story which was appropriated and made a fable of by the writer who is known to us as *Æsop*, and which has been transplanted into every country in the world. There would really seem to be nothing new; tramways are found in Thebes and Memphis; the balloon flies in idea through many a classical story; the telegraph, under another form, flashed intelligence from one district to another of the ancient world; and even our choicest classical traditions have various homes. When Europeans first arrived among the New Zealanders, they found Hero and Leander a local legend, with the slight difference that it was the lady who dashed through the flood to meet the dusky lover, who quietly held the lamp to guide her to the trysting-place.

There is something very singular in the way in which errors still spring up, like weeds, on the spot where the original seed was sown. Not many months ago, the *Times*' correspondent in Paris communicated to that paper the translation of a letter which had just appeared in a French provincial journal, as an illustration of the simplicity of the modern Gaul. The sample was afforded by a letter, allegedly written by a soldier in hospital to his colonel, who had sent to the invalid the news of his father's death. The soldier's epistle was to this effect:—"Colonel: I thank you for the death of my father. It's an accident, like any other; let us hope, however, that it will have no bad consequences. . . . I have just broken my leg, with which I have the honour to be, your very obedient servant!" Now, this sample of modern French simplicity and humour is as old as the oldest French jest-book, and that will give it an age of several centuries.

But authors, journalists, and critics at home occasionally err, even like their brethren abroad. The *Examiner* recently reviewed a book called "*The Campaigner at Home*," by *Shirley*. In that book the author states that a clergyman—a friend of his—had assured him that he had recently met with a sample of ignorance which had sorely distressed him. Encountering a stranger girl in his parish, the clergyman asked her whose child she was; to which she answered that she was "the child of wrath;" and on being asked where she was born, she as readily replied, "born in sin." Now, what a respectable clergyman relates, to an equally respectable author, as a trait of his recent experiences, *must* be true; but the singularity is, that the *Examiner*, whose critics are not

wanting in acuteness and long memories, should not have been aware that this story, now cited by it as new, appeared in its own columns between forty and fifty years ago. If I mistake not, the invention of it is due to the felicitous humour of Leigh Hunt.

There is a story told of Dr. Johnson, in which he is represented as referring to a literary friend, who would seem to have lacked the usual modesty by which literary men are distinguished. This is illustrated by Johnson's remark to another friend:—"Sir, I never did the man any harm, yet he *would* read his tragedy to me!" As human nature has been of much the same quality in all ages, it is possible that this anecdote may be true; but it closely resembles, with a difference, one told by Horace, of a certain Drusus, who combined the very opposite vocations of historian and money-lender. This Drusus, when a debtor came to excuse himself, on the "gloomy calends," for not having prepared to pay principal, or perhaps even interest, used to make the poor wretch sit down, and, with slavishly-outstretched neck, listen, while his creditor read aloud to him his prosaic passages of history.

If old jokes thus repeat themselves, old customs, too, have a wonderful vitality. In Blunt's "Vestiges," we find that, among other old Italian observances, that of demanding payment of debts on the first of every month is retained by some of the modern Italians. "I was assured by a Roman gentleman," says Blunt, "with very great feeling, that the epithet '*tristes calendas*' was never more applicable to the calends than at this moment."

To Dr. Johnson, by his biographer; to Lord North, by Earl Mount-Edgcombe; and to Monk Lewis, by the Rev. Philip Smith (in his "Encyclopædia of Wit"), is assigned the paternity of a remark which is believed to be as old as the Tudor period, if not older. According to some chroniclers, an acrobat was going through some thrilling feats on the rope; according to others, a violinist was performing a wonderful achievement on his instrument; according to Lord Mount-Edgcombe, Catalani was performing a *tour de force* in vocalization, when, to the comment that it was "difficult," came the reply, "Difficult! I wish it were impossible!" Lord North was as likely to have made such a reply as any one. He had more practice of wit than he possessed love for music; and when he was asked to join his brother, the Bishop of Winchester, in subscribing to the "Concerts of Ancient Music," he answered, "I would do so most readily if I were only as deaf as my brother!"

Lord North did not become deaf, but blind. The same affliction visited his old political opponent, Colonel Barré. The two antagonists were brought face to face with each other in the Assembly Rooms at Bath, long after their season of warfare was over. Lord North was the wittier man, and he said, with great readiness, "Colonel, I should be as glad to see you as you would, I am sure, be happy to see me, which is

more than we should have felt or said in the old days." Something like this is told of blind old Madame de Deffand and a friend "with the sightless orbs;" and there is a French (alleged) origin to many of our *good* stories. The question is not what date is assigned to an old story now, but what is the date of the oldest recorded edition of the story. Only the other day some praise was given to a dissenting preacher for inventing such a happy word (infelicitously called so) as "ingemination;" but the readers of Horace Walpole know that the word was used by him in his letters, and they probably think that it has no more claim to be admitted into the English language than the "anfractuosities" of Dr. Johnson.

Some stories, doubtless, repeat themselves accidentally. There is one of an old French duke who used nightly to visit an old French countess to play picquet with her, but he found this so inconvenient in winter, as he had to return home, that he proposed marriage, in order that he might decently stay. What is told of him subsequently is remarkably like the following story in "Richardsoniana:"—"Very often the taste of perpetually running after diversions is not a mark of any pleasure taken in them, but of none taken in ourselves. This sallying abroad is only from uneasiness at home, which is in every one's self. Like a gentleman who, overlooking them at White's, at piquet, till three or four in the morning, on a dispute, they referred to him. When he protested that he 'knew nothing of the game,' 'Zounds!' say they, 'and sit here till this time?' 'Gentlemen, I'm married!' 'Oh, sir, we beg pardon!'" It was so with the French duke: he married that he might stay at home; and it was just then he discovered that he could not abandon his old habit of going out, and accordingly he stayed abroad late because he happened to be married.



IN A WEST INDIA HURRICANE.

“SILENCE ! the Admiral is going to tell us a story.”

“Well,” replied a weather-beaten, nautical-looking old gentleman, “if you really want a story, I’ll tell you one.

“I was a midshipman in the *Eurotas*, at that time forming one of the fleet on the West India station. There had been a great deal of sickness in the fleet, and I, among the rest, had been laid up with the fever. When I recovered, I and one of my brother middies got permission to go up to Barbadoes for change of air.

“I had a friend, or rather a distant relative, who was living a little way out of Bridge Town. I had never seen him, but he, hearing that I was on that station, had written home to say how pleased he should be if I could pay him a visit.

“Accordingly, I and my friend, whose name was Grant, took a passage from Jamaica in a Baltimore schooner, bound for Carlisle Bay.

“It took us six days to beat up to Barbadoes ; and on the seventh we landed at Bridge Town, and at once made our way to Mount St. Elizabeth, the name of my friend’s residence.

“Our arrival was quite unexpected, for in those days it took longer to forward letters from island to island than it did to send one home ; but, though I took my friend by surprise, and had also brought Grant with me on spec., our welcome was such as put us instantly at our ease.

“The weather, for some days past, had been very sultry, and this one the hottest of any ; we were, therefore, not very sorry, after having performed our ablutions, to find ourselves seated in the cool verandah of Mount St. Elizabeth.

“Mr. Walkingshaw was Barbadian born, but his wife, though a veritable Cockney, was, from long residence, quite a Creole. She had the true West India drawl, and both in look and manner was as much a Creole as either her husband or her daughter. Indeed, more so than her daughter, for Julia Walkingshaw, though a Barbadian, had been long in England, and still retained the beautiful rose-tint on her cheeks which is the characteristic of English beauty.

“Julia was the only member of the family to whom I was known. She and I, however, were old friends ; in short, in days gone and past, I had been a sort of boy-lover of hers, and, as I fancied, a favoured one, and I at least still continued to cherish the old passion.

“I suppose I must have shown my preference, for I had not been many days in Bridge Town before I came across some pale but envious

beauties, who affirmed that Julia's colour was not real; but this was, I am sure, a libel, as no woman would venture on rouge in the tropics; they are too often in a melting mood for anything but natural colours to stand. At any rate, Julia Walkingshaw was a solitary rose among a bevy of lilies, and was, of course, a subject of envy. But, apart from this, like all Creoles, she was a most charming creature. There was something so deliciously languid in the glance of her eye, and her manner was so cordial and winning, that I felt as though I was under a spell; but her chief charm lay in her figure, which had all the voluptuous roundness of tropical girlhood.

"With a host and hostess bent on making my visit a round of pleasure, and a sweet girl, who seemed never better pleased than when she was exercising her fascinations upon me, you may imagine that the time passed very pleasantly.

"I arrived at Barbadoes on the fifth of July, and on that day five weeks we were all assembled, after tea, in the piazza of Mount St. Elizabeth. The mansion was situated on rising ground, and commanded a fine view of Bridge Town and the roadstead, which was crowded with small craft, together with a number of larger vessels waiting to complete their cargoes.

"The evening was superbly beautiful; the bay lay before us in panoramic splendour; the sea was as smooth as glass; and, if an occasional air was wafted across it, the ripple only served to show the effect of the sunlight to greater perfection.

"Those who have not passed an evening in the piazza of a West India house have missed one of the most exquisite pleasures I know of. A tropical sunset is at all times a gorgeous scene, and this one was eminently so.

"The sea, like a lake of molten sapphire and beryl, lay hushed in the deepest repose, while overhead, the sky expanded into an arch of the purest blue, which, as the sun sank lower and lower, became suffused with a soft amethystine brightness, spreading like the glow on beauty's cheek; growing deeper and deeper as the sun touched the horizon, till both sea and sky were steeped in a flood of prismatic colours. Then, as if to cradle the departing luminary, a bank of soft clouds sprang up around him; and he, fascinated by the crimson glory by which he was surrounded, lingered for a while on the horizon, and then sank languidly into his ruby bed.

"The short twilight verged into night; the stars came out large and luminous, appearing as though they were surrounded by a halo, and then the full-orbed moon rose, and flung a silvery sheen over the whole scene.

"How strangely beautiful it was to sit in that verandah, and look out upon the night, so radiant in its calm, still beauty! Everything seemed to lull the senses into repose; the night-wind fanned my cheek;

it rustled softly among the trees and shrubs, wafting hither and thither the perfume of the orange, the lime, the jasmine, and a thousand other sweet-smelling plants. A low musical hum rose from the grass, while from the groves beyond, mocking birds, in rich gushes, poured forth a chorus of sweet sounds. These were occasionally diversified by the sonorous croakings of the tree-toads and the sharp chirping hiss of the cicada ; while the whole was accompanied by a singularly mournful cadence from the shore, which rose and fell as the surf, which, spite of the calmness of the sea, rolled in long white billows, and broke upon the sandy beach. A night so lovely, the full beauty of which no words can represent, can only be seen in the tropics ; and the music was worthy of the night.

“There was something in this soft moonlit scene, where all was so bright and tranquil, which was to me peculiarly solemn. It seemed to lift me above the grosser passions of my nature, and filled my heart with a sort of religious awe. I felt, as it were, that the Almighty was nearer to me than He had ever been ; that I could actually feel His presence ; and as I lifted up my heart in thankful praise, it seemed as though an angel was playing upon the tenderest and most reverential chords of my heart, and that the words I breathed were the notes which came at his touch.

“We all retired to our apartments about half-past eleven o'clock ; and as I had had a rather fatiguing day, I fell asleep at once. About two I was awakened by a tremendous down-pour of rain, which soon found its way through the roof. I did not pay much attention to the drip, drip, drips I could hear in different parts of the room, but when a great splash descended right upon my nose, I thought it was time to turn out and see how the land lay. I accordingly rose and got a light, and on looking round for a dry place for my bedstead, I found my room was in a perfect flood.

“Not knowing what better to do, I first fished up my clothes, and then called Mr. Walkingshaw : and he at once roused up the house negroes, who brought pots and pans to catch the intrusive rain. However, in an hour or so, it was all over, and the moon shone out as bright as ever.

“The following morning, when I rose, the sky was without a cloud. Never was a landscape viewed under a more lovely aspect. The rain of the past night had imparted a more than usual brightness to the verdure, whilst a brilliant sun spread a glow of splendour over both sea and land.

“Never was sea, with its glancing specks of white, more beautiful or more intensely blue ; never was the heaven above of a brighter azure ; and never before had I seen the distant hills or the waving cocoa-nut trees so clearly and sharply defined against the sky ! It was a morning and a scene never to be surpassed, and scarcely to be equalled.

"To any one accustomed to the bold scenery which characterizes the generality of the West India islands, that of Barbadoes is tame; but admitting that the scene before me was wanting in that chaotic grandeur which I had been used to in Jamaica, it was nevertheless picturesque in the extreme. Its beauties were softer and more delicate, the signs of cultivation more numerous, and the foliage that luxuriated around Mount St. Elizabeth and robed the sides of the hills, was as lovely in the gentleness of its touch as the Blue Mountain scenery was grand in its precipitous majesty.

"Such was the aspect of Barbadoes on the 10th of August, and such was the scene I gazed out upon as we all sat at breakfast. I noticed during the meal that Mr. Walkingshaw was somewhat uneasy, and I then remembered that on the previous evening he had predicted bad weather, and had even hinted something about the approach of a hurricane. I laughed at him for his croaking, but it had no effect. He took all my banter in good humour, saying:

"Ah! you are young and thoughtless; besides which you have yet to learn that, in these latitudes, appearances are deceitful. Fine as it now is, I will make a wager that four-and-twenty hours will not elapse before we have a gale, if nothing worse. You forget that we are in the hurricane months."

"I'll allow you to know best," I replied; "but, as far as my knowledge of weather extends, I should say that a gale would be the last thing I should look for."

"A low, merry laugh from the other side of the table caused me to look up, and I found the sparkling eyes of Julia fixed upon me. As I did so she dropped her eyelids and coloured slightly.

"What are you laughing at, Julia?" asked my host.

"At Mr. Vernon's thinking himself so weather-wise. Why, even I can see that there is something brewing. See there!" she went on, pointing with her finger.

"I see nothing," I replied, "except that the breeze has failed us, and that it is a dead calm."

"Look away there in the north: do you see those clouds?"

"I looked and saw what convinced me that Julia and my host were right, and that the calm was not likely to last long; and in half an hour we were in the thick of a tremendous squall. It was short, but sharp; though, as far as I could see, we only got the tail of it. During the remainder of the day, though we had a succession of squalls, it was for the most part calm.

"Towards five o'clock the heat was oppressive; there was a portentous stillness in the air, and dense packs of leaden clouds began to gather in the north. As time passed these extended, till the sky gradually became covered, except in one place, where there was a small patch of light, which only served more clearly to show the dismal bleakness by which

it was surrounded. However, all this ended in nothing more than a squall and a shower, and very soon all was fair again.

"‘I think, my dear sir,’ I said, ‘that your hurricane is going to play you false; why, I’m afraid you’ll not get off with anything so bad as a gale!’

"‘Don’t be hasty,’ he replied, ‘I’ve got twelve hours to the good yet.’

"Towards ten o’clock it was again perfectly calm, and the stars shone over our heads, bright and clear; but in the north-west there was an ominous bank of black vapour, out of which, every now and again, the lightning burst in vivid forks.

"Shortly after, it seemed as though a pall had been thrown over us, and the rolling of the distant thunder and the continuous flashing of the lightning was fearfully grand.

"About eleven o’clock the wind had increased to a stiff gale, and Mr. Walkingshaw, having made up his mind for a hurricane, called up the negroes, and had all the doors and windows thoroughly fastened, and strongly barricaded.

"Inside we sat, a pale and anxious group, for no one thought of going to bed; outside the scene was every minute growing grander and grander; the tempestuous raging of the wind had increased to such an extent that every now and again the house was shaken to its foundations, and the roll of the thunder and noise of the rushing wind was like thousands of heavy vans rattling over the London stones; while the heavens, which were canopied with apparently solid masses of black clouds, were illuminated with incessant flames of lightning. Not like the short-lived flashes, such as we have in our temperate clime, but quivering sheets of blazing light, which skimmed along the surface of the sea, which was boiling like a cauldron, and were accompanied by forks of electric fire of the most surpassing brilliancy, darting about in all directions.

"Anything more terrifically sublime cannot be conceived. Every minute the violence of the wind increased, the rain was descending in torrents. The noise of the conflict was something past all conception. It seemed as though squadrons of unseen spirits were contending in the air, so mighty was the commotion, and so wildly did the wind shriek and rage above our heads.

"In truth, the scene was one of extraordinary fascination, and I was powerless to do other than sit and gaze at it, and while I did so I could only commune with my own heart and tremble. I did not, however, suffer from fear, in the ordinary sense of the word. My mind was too much occupied by the magnitude of the phenomena passing before my eyes for that. No, spite of the imminent danger we were in, my mind was filled with awe and reverence, and my heart was stirred to its inmost core.

“Who could witness such a scene without recalling to his mind the stirring words of the old Jewish poet? Who see and feel all this, without being painfully conscious of his own impotence in such a situation? At such a time we do feel that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth; that His hand was even now being felt in the deep places of the earth; that the mountains trembled at His presence; at the voice of His thunder the earth shook, and the foundations of the hills were moved.

“At this moment we were all startled by a terrific blast, followed by shrieks and cries; a loud report, and the crashing and rending of timbers. In another instant the room was filled by a lot of negroes, men and women, in whose faces were depicted consternation and terror.

“In vain my host asked for an explanation; they were all too much confounded to answer, and we passed out to the back of the house. Here, by the aid of the electric fluid, we saw that the kitchen and some of the out-houses had fallen, carrying with them a portion of the house.

“Nothing could be done under such circumstances, and we were obliged to return to the saloon.

“At this time the astounding roar of the hurricane which rushed down upon us cannot be described. The whole house trembled and rocked, and the earth beneath us seemed to vibrate as the destroying blast raged over it. No thunder could now be heard. Had the cannons of a hundred contending armies been discharged simultaneously, or the most tremendous thunder-claps crashed and rattled over our heads, their sounds could not have been heard, the roaring and yelling of the wind was so appalling.

“We all sat amazed, paralysed, and in a state of stupor; our faculties were for the time utterly confounded.

“I have omitted to mention the minor discomforts, such as the blowing in of windows, and the rapid incursions of the rain, for we still had a roof above our heads, and walls to shelter us from the blast; but these were soon to be taken from us.

“About three o'clock, the wind for a short time abated, but this was followed by one of those tremendous bursts which had previously caused us so much terror; this one, however, came with accumulated fury, and in an instant the roof was borne away, the room was in darkness, and we were deluged with falling slates and a torrent of water.

“The next flash of lightning revealed to us the perilous nature of our position. The walls of the house were cracked in various places, and if we did not want to be overwhelmed and crushed by them, we must seek shelter elsewhere; but where was this to be found?

“In her terror, Julia had clung to me, and was almost fainting in my arms. Now more than ever I felt the imminence of our peril; but Julia must be saved at all risks. Where to seek for safety, I could not

tell ; but anywhere was better than staying to be buried in the ruins of the house.

"With Julia in my arms, I made my way to the piazza, and from thence down a flight of steps to the ground. The moment I was clear of the house, such was the fury of the wind that I was taken right off my legs, and I and my burden were carried some distance—I have no idea how far—but we seemed to be whirled along like chaff. The next instant I came violently in contact with something, Julia was torn from my arms, and I lost my consciousness.

"Slowly my senses came back to me. The lightning had ceased, and the darkness was awful. A few minutes afterwards the deafening noise of the wind sank to a solemn murmur, or, more correctly speaking, to a distant roar, as the sound of a mighty wind rushing through an open vault. I was in the very centre of the vortex.

"I ran about, calling wildly on Julia, but she did not answer. Shrieks, groans, and cries reached my ear from all quarters, and though I called loudly to my friends, I got no reply.

"Suddenly three fiery meteors, one after the other, came coursing across the heavens, and plunged into the sea ; and at the same time the wind, which had previously been blowing from the north-east and north, suddenly shifted to the west, and the hurricane again burst upon me, hurling before it thousands of objects of all descriptions.

"For the space of half an hour, all I could do was to cling with desperate energy to a tree which I fortunately found near me. Time went on. Of poor Julia I could neither see nor hear anything, and of her fate, and of that of the rest of my friends, I was in total ignorance. To seek them now was impossible. The force of the wind was such that if I had once lost my hold, I should have been swept away like a feather. Independently of this, I was surrounded by dangers of all descriptions. During the flashing of the lightning, which was almost incessant, I could see that the air was full of the most dangerous missiles, any of which, if they had struck me, would have caused instant death ; trees up-rooted ; articles of furniture, tiles, beams, stones, and bricks, flew over my head in confused shoals. The noise caused by these, combined with the howling of the tempest ; the noise of the descending torrents of rain ; the roaring and rattling of the thunder ; the continued crash of falling houses ; the groans of the wounded and dying ; the shrieks of despair, and the screams of women and children calling for help, formed an accumulation of terror-inspiring sounds—a hideous din, almost too great for human fortitude, and too vast for human conception.

"No one who has not witnessed such a scene, or been placed in such a situation, can form any adequate conception of its horrors. No one can imagine the mental agony, the painful intensity of my feelings, as groan after groan and shriek after shriek reached my ear, and I not

knowing but that they came from my own friends, and yet unable to render any assistance.

"I was alone, surrounded on all sides by the most astounding manifestations of the Almighty's power; my sight and hearing almost overpowered; and expecting that each moment would be my last. What wonder, then, that I felt appalled, bewildered, and that my powers of thought were almost annihilated?

"For more than an hour longer, exposed to the full violence of this ruthless tempest, almost drowned in the avalanches of rain, and confounded by the unparalleled uproar, I clung on, looking for the day to break, and hoping that the light would bring some amelioration of my position.

"About half-past four, as near as I could guess, the blast veered suddenly from west to south. The lightning ceased for the space of six or seven minutes, and the darkness was inexpressibly solemn. Then, as though it had been reserving itself for a grand display, the next instant the lightning burst forth in a series of the most brilliant coruscations. For about a minute it played between the clouds and the sea in a (to me) novel and surprising manner. Flaming blazes issued from the clouds, and were instantly returned from the sea. These flashes of lurid light succeeded each other instantly, and were like the rapid and regular discharges of artillery from opposing fleets closely engaged.

"Whilst this remarkable phenomenon was proceeding, the earth vibrated in a manner and in time answering with the action of the lightning. Twice, when the coruscations were more rapid in succession and more intensely brilliant, the earth experienced corresponding shocks.

"During this time the whole scene was brilliantly illuminated, so that I could see the most minute objects. There was the water of the bay, rolling in mountainous waves, lashed into chaotic fury by the storm, at times rising up till it seemed to strike against the almost solid clouds. There, too, were the ships, wrecked and dismasted, tossing at the mercy of the waves or lining the shore; and the town in ruins.

"For nearly ten minutes there was a lull in the wind, and during these coruscations there had been a deep hush, but the moment they ceased the hurricane again burst upon us with redoubled fury.

"Daylight at last came, but it brought no diminution in the violence of the tempest; and instead of any amelioration of my position, it only added new horrors to the scene. Nothing could compare with the terrible devastation that presented itself to my view on every side. Not a house or building within the scope of my vision was left standing. The trees were either uprooted or deprived of their leaves and branches, and the bright, luxuriant landscape of the previous day was now black and bare. In one night spring had been changed to the dreariest winter.

"In vain I looked round for a better place of shelter. There was none to be seen; and the tension of my nerves, and the exertion I had been obliged to make to retain my hold, had been so great that I was well nigh exhausted. I was drenched to the skin, and my clothes were torn to shreds.

"During the lulls in the storm, I heard moans proceeding from a gully which skirted the field in which I was, but I was obliged to leave the sufferers to their fate, for to have quitted my hold, and sought to descend to their assistance, would have been madness, as I should inevitably have been carried away by the force of the wind, and dashed into it.

"As time passed, the tree, which had hitherto been my anchor of hope, began to show signs of giving way. At length, under the influence of one of those terrific bursts, it first bent and groaned, the earth beneath me quivered, root after root cracked, and again I was swept forward, the sport of the ruthless wind.

"I have no recollection of anything which took place after this, till I awoke, as it were, and found myself in the nave of the Cathedral, among fifty or sixty others, black, brown, and fair, with my right arm in a sling, and my head bound up.

"It was high noon: I could see that by the position of the sun, which was gleaming in fitfully through an aperture in the roof: and the hurricane was over. Ill as I was, my anxiety as to the fate of my friends was so great that after a time I rose up and left the church.

"When I got into the street, ruin, desolation, and destruction surrounded me on all sides. Unroofed and half-ruined houses, heaps of tiles and shingles, immense beams of wood, broken furniture, stones and bricks, the remnants of roofs and wooden houses, and the mangled remains of animals and human creatures, were all hurled together in the direst confusion. It was a piteous sight: here the head of one poor victim protruded from among the débris, there an arm or a leg, in some instances severed from the body. On all sides women were rushing about, calling frantically for their husbands or children; men, with wild and ghastly faces, seeking their wives and families; others, who the day before had been in good circumstances, beggared by the hurricane, were gazing about them stupidly, as though they did not understand what had happened.

"I made my way out of this as fast as I could, inquiring of all of whom I had any knowledge, if anything had been seen or heard of the family at Mount St. Elizabeth, but I could get no tidings of them.

"My friend's house was scarcely a mile from the town; but it took me more than an hour to reach it, or rather the spot where it had stood. The beautiful villa was gone—scattered to the four winds of heaven. Literally there was not one stone left standing, nor was there a vestige remaining of the luxuriant groves and woods by which it had been surrounded. The very herbage was rooted up, and the soil washed away.

"After searching about, and not finding anything human of whom to make inquiry for my friends, I made my way back to the town. I had hardly entered it when, to my joy, I saw Mr. Walkingshaw coming towards me. Apart from his face and figure, he was scarcely recognisable, for he had hardly a rag to his back. I accosted him, and asked after Julia and the rest of the family. He answered me quietly and distinctly, and told me that he could gain no intelligence of them. To my utter surprise, he next asked me who I was, and why I was so anxious about his family. The terror of the past night had deprived him of all recollection of my person. He knew Arthur Vernon, he said ; but he did not recognize me.

"But I cannot linger over this part of my story ; I must hasten on to its sad and fatal dénouement. With a heart weary and desponding, I continued my search——" The old Admiral's voice trembled, and he paused.

"After a time, we found Mrs. Walkingshaw, and we heard from her that Grant was all right, and that she had sent him out in quest of us ; but of Julia we could hear nothing. Every part of the grounds, and the country within two miles, had been searched, but without success, and I was returning to the town, with a sinking heart, and my mind filled with a presentiment of evil, when I met a negro——" Again the Admiral's voice faltered, and tears stole into his eyes.

"Poor Julia !" he continued, in mournfully tender accents, "they had found her, but she was a corpse ! They took me to see her. There she lay—stiff, cold, lifeless ; yet, even in death, beautiful as ever." And the poor old gentleman buried his face in his hands.

A young girl went up to him, and placing her hand caressingly on his shoulder, said, "Ah ! that, then, was the reason you never got married, uncle Arthur ?"

"It was, my dear," answered the Admiral.



OUR LOG-BOOK.

THERE have been some stirrings in our waters during the past month. The joint-effort of Mr. Dickens and Mr. Wilkie Collins, apart from its merits or demerits, must excite curiosity and interest. It is clear that in "No Thoroughfare" the latter gentleman has had the lion's share of the labour, whatever of lion's share may fall to him besides. Mr. Dickens's portion is merely incidental, though some of his touches are surpassing fine and unmistakeably marked. Mr. Collins's superb inventive faculty shows itself throughout, though under a little restriction here—unfolding, doubling up, coiling, and uncoiling in its brilliant, baffling, serpentine fashion. And the result is exactly such as might be expected. Mr. Wilding is a little over-done, but full of humour; and Joey Ladle, the cellarman—who insists on being a good pecking-machine—is admirable. This is one of Joey's happiest deliverances:—"Gentlemen, it is all wery well for you that has been accustomed to take your wine into your systems by the convivial channel of your throttles, to put a lively face upon it; but I says, 'I have been accustomed to take *my* wine in at the pores of the skin, and took that way, it acts different.'" But we mustn't say more on the matter, at once for our own sake and that of both writers and readers.

Then, Mr. Mark Lemon—supreme in his own walk—has actually surpassed himself in "Golden Fetters." Of course, everybody who is in the least familiar with the fiction of the day, knows Mr.—we must write Mark—Lemon's genuine humour. Pure and fine, rather than deep, it plays naturally over the surface of his subject (let that be the gravest or the driest); although it must be said that it never breaks very far through the outer covering. But now and then it gathers itself up, so to speak, into a jet of diverse-coloured flickering flame, the light, reflected from varied faces of fact, falling back from all sides into the most grotesque shapes and kaleidoscopic combinations: and this, too, without the least sacrifice of truth. "Golden Fetters" gives many instances of this. The interview between the rascally lawyer Daw and Oldy—we mean Alderwinkle, is inimitable in its mingled grimness and waggery; as well as that scene after the burning of Mr. Perryonet's theatre, where, through all Alderwinkle's sympathy, the gleams of his roguish wit shoot forth like the sun's rays through November mist. And this peculiar faculty saves Mr. Mark Lemon from any tendency to two vices which are very common just now with novelists. The one is the conscious overdrawing of character for the sake of sharp contrasts, the other cari-

cature, in the production of which the former is a chief element. Equity is what Mr. Lemon aims at; and though he "gives out" no lessons, by his very truthfulness and fairness he teaches many in the most kindly way, and charity is not the least of these. It surprises one, and comes almost with the force of a revelation, which, however, is only the force of truth, that the "Commissioner," the dodger, the dog-fancier, the vagabond, who had sunk so deep in the slough of vice and crime, could yet stand up for his dead "erring sister's" honour, rush impetuously to his own bed-room with the poor scarred creature, Rosa Melville, in his arms, and force a loan of a few pounds upon the stricken player, Perryonet, at the crisis. Such glimpses of genuine kindness relieve human nature at its worst, and so do they here. The extremes of refined life and low life—Grosvenor Square, gipsies' camps, and dog-dealers' resorts—are touched with the same fidelity and skill. The work is so compact that there are no loose threads we can seize to hang an outline on; and this must be our excuse for stopping short, with a sincere recommendation of the book. Our readers will not regret making the acquaintance of the two Mr. and Mrs. Barnards, of misguided Nelly Scott, as much sinned against as sinning, of the Deerings, and the rest; and we assure them of interest in the description of the way in which Alderwinkle gave the sharp lawyer Daw a Roland for an Oliver.

The cheap edition of "Far above Rubies" tempted us to read at this late date a novel which is not strictly new. It is in many ways a contrast to "Golden Fetters." It contains much fine and careful work, much balancing of fine points, a deal of excellent writing. Yet we confess to a little disappointment. The novel here and there wants clearness, point, compactness. Squire Dudley and Mr. Black seem to us to be feeble and vague. And this, notwithstanding the manner in which the former is followed through a severe mental struggle, brought on by losses in speculation, till at last suicide is tried, but fails. Both in essentials and style, the novel is thin, long drawn out, sweetness being held to atone for almost everything beside. The end is far better than the beginning, and shows careful study; but certainly one half the first and nearly as much of the second volume is only a superior artistic sort of padding, hardly such as we would expect from the writer of "George Geith." And this we say, though we willingly recognize the essentially English character of the novel, which has been intensified by careful observation of certain phases of City life and City men; and the skill with which recent commercial revelations have been used to form centres of interest.

As Mrs. Riddell's novel is essentially English, so Mr. Holmes's "Guardian Angel" is essentially American. It is racy of the soil. The bobolink and the musquash meet you unexpectedly at almost every turn. And we say unexpectedly with reason; for the best American writers have so successfully followed the purity and grace of the English

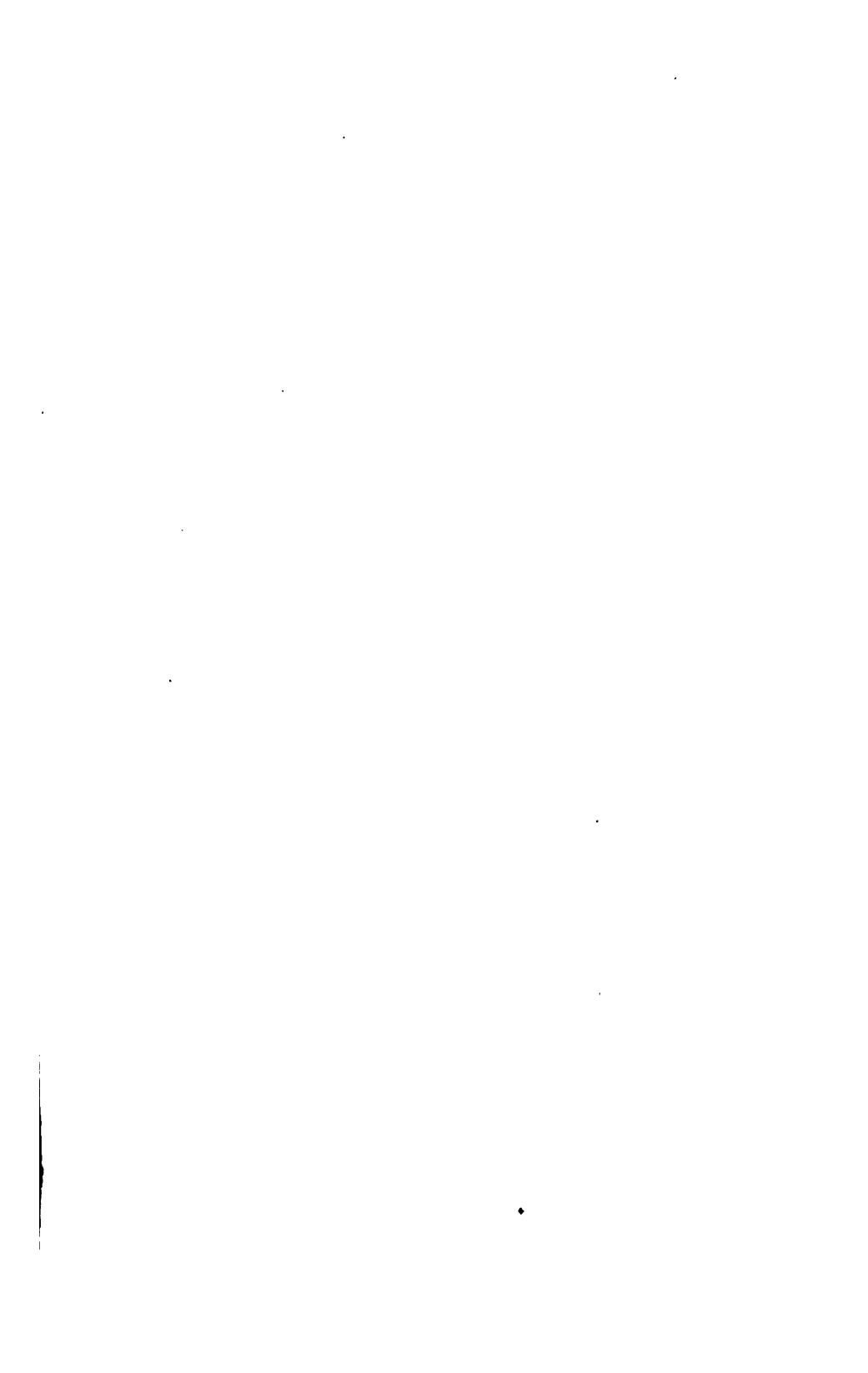
writers of last century, that we might sometimes forget for a moment we were not in company with Goldsmith, or Steele, or Addison. Holmes has all the simple quaintness of the first, the fulness of the second, the dainty, airy grace of the third. Yet, as stones are said to give strength to some soils, so the Americanisms—here and there as rough and sharp as those of Artemus the delicious—give power to his prose, and even add to the richness of its music. One has said that some flowers get sweeter from being transplanted; the flowers of the English language have certainly not lost, but gained, from their transference to the soil of the new world. Holmes is a wonderful writer; his works should be read by every one who reads, were it only for the subtle sweetness of his style. But as a story, this is a most masterly piece of work. We think we could show that it was only possible in such conditions of society as America presents just now, but for that we have no space. In "Elsie Venner" the whole power of the writer was so concentrated upon one physico-psychological point that it turned off all subsidiary relations, and the result was that the work lost human interest, and became very much a mere study for the scientific. But here the peculiar analysis is subordinate to presentment of characters, though it lay in the primary conception that the secondary characters should be tantalizing from their slightness. Myrtle Hazard must be the centre of the book, influenced and influencing in almost as wonderful a way, so that, to preserve variety in the book, it was needful that there should be a number of characters, as it were, throwing in relieving side-lights from without. Of these the best are Mr. Murray Bradshaw, the lawyer; and Susan Posey; and Gifted Hopkins, the village poet, of all of whom we wish, with all our heart, that we could see more. Biles Gridley, A.M., the old student—whose sympathy at first sight might seem to have dribbled away with those hopes of life that sunk with the great book, "Thoughts of the Universe"—is a fine creation. His heart-springs have not been dried up, but only frozen over; and at the touch of a powerful new interest, they open up and flow freely. As for Myrtle Hazard herself, she is unique. Supposed to be possessed by the spirits of seven distinct progenitors, she passes successively through the peculiar psychological phases proper to each; the author showing peculiar tact in relieving the oppressive and morbid associations by introducing suitable characters—the old memory-stricken doctor, for example. All is skilfully done, and in a most interesting manner, there just being here and there sufficient of the salt of caricature to give a fillip to the reader's risibility. Nor does the story lack incident; Mr. Holmes has here kept as actively moving as the most rattling sensationalist.

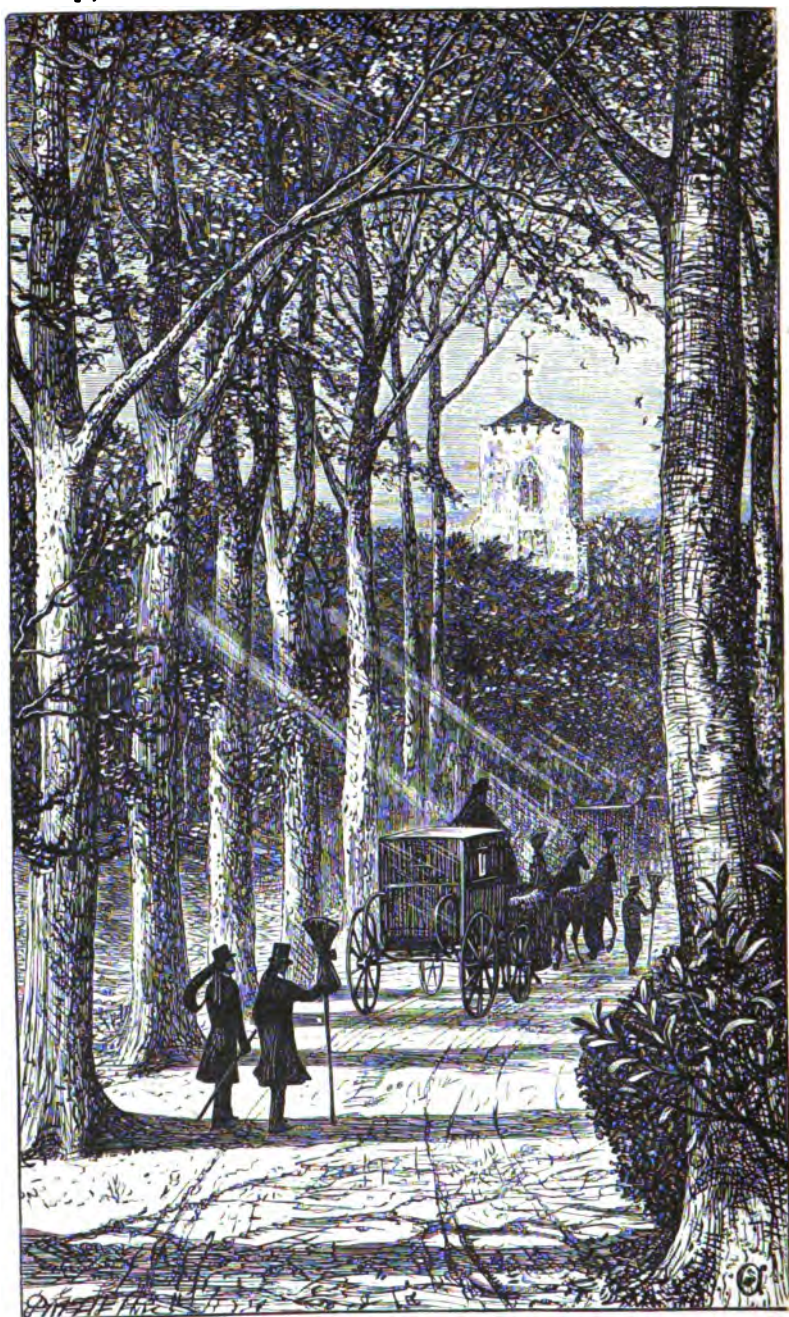
Turning from the "Guardian Angel" to "Only to be Married," is like passing into a new atmosphere. Yet, as has been well said, all things are blood-relations to one another, and there is nothing single or separate. We may indicate a point of relation, or at least, of associa-

tion, between these two works by-and-by. "Only to be Married" is unmistakeably clever. It has sharp clear lines of character, just, perhaps, a little affectedly angular and distinctive; and a well wrought out plot. The author's mind is logical, or analytical, rather than creative, though there are significant traces of a rare critical receptivity in all that pertains to excellence in creation. There is the keen eye and the open mind. But we should say the author's emotions are *below par* for an educated man, not to speak of a gentlewoman; so that there is a certain hardness and ungratefulness of drawing whete it might not have been. Fineness in art can only come from fineness in nature. There are so many evidences of defect in this respect here that we cannot believe "Only to be Married" is a woman's work; for we have seen the coarsest specimens of their sex melt and break down over a baby. But our author hardly does that, even over the long-expected and much-talked-of "Samuel" when at last he makes his advent. To speak truth, however, this novel might have more easily deceived than the author's former one, "Frederick Rivers;" and this proves that the writer has made a great advance. "Frederick Rivers" was written merely to *show up* certain forms of Dissenting life, not to *show forth* certain beautiful elements in character, and, though humorous, was very grim and unrelieved, and now and then even grotesque. Bung and Lush were puppets set up to be beaten, Punch-like, by a vixenish nature, that certainly could scream and scold. There is far more art here, therefore far more truth. But still it must be said that there is little hope of Florence Williamson ever *ascending* to the higher plane of creative effort. Her process is alien to this. She fixes upon certain straggling points of character, met with in real life, works from each of these as from a separate centre, assimilating helpful elements from many quarters; and she cunningly connects them together by logical processes, and the most improbable incidents. The chief character here, for instance, gets his foot bruised just at a most opportune moment to bring him to the good woman he wished to *wrong* by marriage. A certain class of writers would have used such a circumstance to interpret Providence; we are doubtful how Florence Williamson means us to read it as regards moral lesson. Yet the work is very readable and attractive; the writer has a most nimble mind, that can use a little as though it were much; once begin reading "Only to be Married" and you find it difficult to stop. Mr. Forester, a sort of half Tito, half-Skimpole, for there is a little of both in him, is a man whose love of comfort and self-gratification leads him into sin and into crime. His parentage is doubtful, but he inherits property through his mother. This property is a source of misfortune instead of blessing. Mr. Forester "seemed to think that life was no more serious than lying on your back in a boat on some sunny day, floating down with the current, just exerting yourself now and then sufficiently to pull ashore and take

some friend on board, just to lie on *his* back and do nothing." It is an old story, the curse of indolence, of idleness ; but the author has exhibited it very forcibly here. Mr. Forester passes from general cheating and seduction to forgery, robbery, and murder, and ends a miserable life by suicide. Patty Wilson, whose fortunes are strangely linked with his, is a sweet creature, though not by any means exalted, after the manner of modern heroines. She has a high sense of duty, and some of her self-debate reminds us, in a vague, distant way of Romola. Now and again a single trait or incident in the association of the two women—Meggy and Patty—shunts our memory somehow on to Mr. Charles Reade's railway line, at the end of which we get a hurried glimpse of Mercy Vint. Leighton, the surgeon, is a fine character, perhaps the most naturally conceived in the book ; and the Rev. Mr. Faithful, though Florence Williamson must, of course, make him laughably stupid, is cleverly touched off. What we meant in saying that there was an affinity between this work and "The Guardian Angel" was this, that the author evidently means us to infer, from the peculiar way in which Forester's father is hinted at, that the son inherited his weak, double, pleasure-loving nature from him, and that it was a sort of fate to him. Perhaps this would not consist very well with some other opinions of the author ; but this is the only artistic meaning we can see in the vague, shadowy way the father is made to move before us, the more powerfully that he is only suggested.







GOING DOWN THE AVENUE.

THE ARGOSY.

FEBRUARY 1, 1868.

ANNE HEREFORD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE."

CHAPTER V.

ANOTHER DREAM.

"I F ever I heard the like of that! One won't be able to open one's lips next before you, Miss Hereford. Did I say anything about her dying, pray? Or about your dying? Or my dying? Time enough to snap me up when I do."

Thus spoke *Jemima*, with a volubility that nearly took her breath away. She had come to my room in the morning with the news that *Mrs. Edwin Barley* was worse. I burst into tears, and asked if she were going to die, which brought forth the above rebuke.

"My thoughts were running upon whether we servants should have mourning given us for young *Mr. King*," resumed *Jemima*, as if she were bent upon removing unpleasant impressions from my mind. "Now just you make haste and dress yourself, Miss Hereford—*Mrs. Edwin Barley* has been asking for you."

I made haste; *Jemima* helped; and she ushered me to the door of the sick-room, halting to whisper a parting word.

"Don't you begin crying again, miss. Your aunt is no more going to die than I am."

The first words spoken by *Mrs. Edwin Barley* were a contradiction to this, curious coincident that it may seem. She was lying very high on the frilled white pillows, no cap on, her cheeks hectic, and her lovely golden hair falling around her head. A large bright fire burned in the grate, and a small tray, with a white cloth and cup on it, stood on the table near.

"Child," she began, holding out her hand to me, "I fear I am about to be taken from you."

I did not answer ; I did not cry ; all tears seemed scared away then. It was a confirmation of my secret, inward fears, and my face turned white.

"What was that you said to me about the Keppe-Carews never dying without a warning ? And I laughed at you ! Do you remember ? Anne, I think the warning came to me last night."

I glanced timidly round the room. It was a luxurious bed-chamber, costly furniture and pretty toilette trifles everywhere. The crimson silk curtains were drawn closely before the bay-window, and I could see Selina clearly in the semi-light.

"Your mamma told you she had a dream, Anne. Well, *I* have had a dream. And yet I feel sure it was not a dream, but reality, reality. She appeared to me last night."

"Who ? Mamma ?"

"Your mamma. The Carew superstition is, that when one is going to die, the last relative, whether near or distant, who has been taken from them by death, comes again to give them notice that their own departure is near. Ursula was the last who went, and she came to me in the night."

"It can't be true," I sobbed, shivering from head to foot.

"She stood there, in the faint rays of the shaded lamp," pursued Selina, not so much as listening to me. "I have not really slept all night ; I have been in that semi-conscious, dozing state when the mind is awake both to dreams and to reality, knowing not which is which. Just as the clock struck two I awoke partially from one of these semi-dreams, and I saw your mamma at the foot of the bed—a shadowy sort of figure and face, but I knew it for Ursula's. She just looked at me and said, 'Selina !' Then I woke up thoroughly—the name, the sound of her well-remembered voice ringing in my ears."

"And seeing her ?" I eagerly asked.

"No. Seeing nothing but the opening between the curtains at the foot of the bed and the door beyond it ; nothing more than is to be seen now."

"Then, Selina, it was a dream after all ?"

"In one sense, yes. The world would call it so. To me it was something more. A minute afterwards the clock struck two, and I was as wide awake as I am now."

The reaction came, and I burst into tears. "Selina ! it was a dream ; it could only have been a dream !"

"I should no doubt think so, Anne, but for what you told me of your mamma's warning. But for hearing that, I might never have remembered that such a thing is said to follow the Keppe-Carews."

What with remorse for having told her, though charged by my mother to do it, and what with my own fears, I could not speak for hysterical sobbing.

"You stupid little sensitive thing!" exclaimed Selina, with a touch of her old lightness; "perhaps in a week's time I shall be well, and running about out of doors with you. Go you down to Charlotte Delves's parlour, and get your breakfast, and then come to me again. I want you to go on an errand for me; but don't say so. Mind that, Anne."

"No, no; I'll not say it, Selina."

"Tell them to give you some honey."

They brought the honey and set out other good things for me in Miss Delves's parlour, but I could not eat: Charlotte Delves was very kind. Both the doctors came in. I watched them into the house; I watched them down stairs again. The physician from Nettleby went straight out: Mr. Lowe came to the parlour.

"My dear," he said to me, "you are to go up to Mrs. Edwin Barley."

"Is she much worse, sir?" I lingered to ask.

"I can hardly say how she is," was his answer. "We must hope for the best."

He stayed in the room himself, and shut the door while he talked to Miss Delves. The hall-clock struck ten as I passed under it, making me start. The hall was clear to-day, and the window and door stood a little open. Jemima told me that Philip King was in a sitting-room at the back, one that was rarely used. I ran quickly up to Selina's chamber. Mr. Edwin Barley was in it, to my dismay. He turned to leave it when I went in, and put his hand kindly enough upon my hair.

"You look pale, little one; you should run out of doors for a while."

His wife watched him from the room with her strangely-altered eyes, and then beckoned to me.

"Shut the door, and bolt it, Anne." And very glad I felt to do it. It was impossible to overcome my fear of Mr. Edwin Barley.

"Do you think you could find your way to Hallam?"

"I dare say I could, aunt."

"Selina, call me Selina," she impatiently interposed. "Call it me to the last."

To the last!

"You remember the way you came from Nettleby, Anne? In going out at the gates by the lodge, Nettleby lies on your left hand, Hallam on your right. You understand?"

"Oh, quite."

"You have only to turn to the right, and keep straight along the high-road; in a short time you come to Hallam village. The way is not at all lonely; cottages and houses are scattered all along it."

"I am sure I could go quite easily, Selina."

"Then put your things on, and take this note," she said, giving me a little piece of paper twisted up. "In going down Hallam Street, you

will see on the left hand a house standing by itself, with 'Mr. Gregg, Attorney at Law,' on a plate on the door. Go in, ask to see Mr. Gregg alone, and give him that note. But mind, Anne, you are not to speak of this to any one. Should Mr. Edwin Barley or any one else meet you, and inquire where you are going, say only that you are walking out. Do you fully understand?"

"Yes."

"Hide the note, so that no one sees it, and give it into Mr. Gregg's hands. Tell him I hope he will comprehend it, but that I was too ill to write it more elaborately."

No one noticed me as I left the house, and I pursued the road to Hallam, my head and thoughts full. Suppose Mr. Edwin Barley *should* meet and question me! I knew that I should make a poor hand at deception: besides being naturally open, mamma had brought me up to be so very candid and truthful. I had crushed the note inside my glove, having no better place of concealment—suppose he should seize my hand and find it! And if the gentleman I was going to see should not be at home, what was I to do then? Bring the note back to Selina, or leave it? I ought to have asked her.

"Well, my little maid, and where are you off to?"

The salutation proceeded from Mr. Martin, who had come right upon me at a turning of the road. My face grew hot as I answered him.

"I am out for a walk, sir."

"But this is rather far to come alone. You are close upon Hallam."

"My Aunt Selina knows it, sir," I said, trembling lest he should stop me, or order me to walk back with him.

"Oh, very well," he answered, good-naturedly. "How is she to-day?"

"She is not any better, sir," I replied. And he left me, telling me I was not to lose myself.

I came to the houses, straggling at first, but soon contiguous to each other, as they are in most streets. Mr. Gregg's stood alone, its plate on the door. A young man came running out of it as I stood hesitating whether to knock or ring.

"If you please, is Mr. Gregg at home?"

"Yes," answered he. "He is in the office. You can go in if you want him."

Opening an inner door, he showed me into a room where there seemed to be a confused mass of faces. In reality there might have been three or four, but they multiplied themselves to my timid eyes.

"A little girl wants to see Mr. Gregg," said the young man.

A tall gentleman came forward, with a pale face and gray whiskers. He said he was Mr. Gregg, and asked what my business was.

"I want to see you by yourself, if you please, sir."

He led the way to another room, and I took the note out of my glove and gave it him. He read it over—to me it appeared a long one—looked at me, and then read it again.

“Are you Anne Hereford?”

“Yes,” I said, wondering how he knew my name. “My aunt, Mrs. Edwin Barley, bade me say she was too ill to write it better, but she hoped you would understand it.”

“Is she so ill as to be in danger?”

“I am afraid so.”

He still looked at me, and twirled the note in his fingers. I could see that it was written with a pencil.

“Do you know the purport of this?” he inquired, pointing to the note.

“No, sir.”

“Did you not read it coming along? It was not sealed.”

“Oh, no. I did not take it out of my glove.”

“Well—tell Mrs. Edwin Barley that I perfectly understand, and shall immediately obey her: tell her all will be ready by the time she sends to me. And—stay a bit. Have you any Christian name besides Anne?”

“My name is Anne Ursula.”

“And what was your father’s name? And what your mother’s?”

“Papa’s was Thomas, and mamma’s Ursula,” I answered, wondering very much.

He wrote down the names, asked a few more questions, and then showed me out at the street-door, giving a parting injunction that I was not to forget the words of his message to Mrs. Edwin Barley, and not to mention abroad that I had been to his office.

Reaching home without hindrance, I was about to enter the sick-room, when Miss Delves softly called to me from the upper stairs: Mrs. Edwin Barley was sleeping, and must not be disturbed. So I went higher up to take my things off, and Charlotte Delves asked me into her chamber—a very nice one, immediately over Mrs. Edwin Barley’s.

“Tread softly, my dear. If she can only sleep, it will do her good.”

I would not tread at all, though the carpet was thick and soft, but sat down on the first chair. Miss Delves was changing her cap. She wore very nice ones always.

“Miss Delves, I wish you’d please to tell me. Do you think my aunt will get well?”

“It is to be hoped so,” was the answer. “But Mr. Edwin Barley is fretting himself to fiddle-strings over it.”

“Do *you* think she will?”

Miss Delves was combing out her long flaxen curls; bright thick curls they were; very smooth. She twirled two round her finger before she answered.

"Yes, I think she will. It is true that she is very ill—very; but, on the other hand, she has youth in her favour."

"Is she dangerously ill?"

"No doubt. But how many people are there, lying in danger daily, who recover! The worst of it is, she is so excited, so restless: the doctors don't like that. It is not to be wondered at, with this trouble in the house: she could not have fallen ill at a more unfortunate time. I think she has a good constitution."

"Mamma used to say that all the Carews had that. They were in general long-lived."

Charlotte Delves looked round at me. "Your mamma was not long-lived. She died young—so to say."

"But mamma's illness came on first from an accident. She was hurt in India. Oh, Miss Delves! can't anything be done to cure my Aunt Selina?"

"My dear, everything will be done that it is possible to do. The doctors talk of the shock to the system; but, as I say, she is young. You must not be too anxious; it would answer no end. Had you a nice walk this morning?"

"Yes."

She finished her hair, and put on the pretty cap, its rich lace lappets falling behind. Then she took up her watch and chain, and looked out at the window as she put them round her neck.

"Here's a policeman coming to the house! I wonder what he wants?"

"Has there been any news yet of George Heneage?"

"None," she answered. "Heneage Grange is being watched."

"Is that where he lives?"

"It is his father's place."

"And is it near to here?"

"Oh, no. More than a hundred miles away. The police think it not improbable that he escaped there at once. The Grange has been searched for him, we hear, unsuccessfully. But the police are by no means sure that he is not concealed there, and they have set a watch."

"Oh dear! I hope they will not find him!"

I said it with a shudder. The finding of George Heneage seemed to promise I knew not what renewal of horror. Charlotte Delves turned her eyes upon me in astonishment and reproof.

"You hope they will not find him! You cannot know what you are saying, Miss Hereford. I think I would give half the good that is left in my life to have him found—and hung. What right had he to take that poor young man's life? or to bring this shocking trouble into a gentleman's family?"

Very true. Of course he had none.

"Mr. Edwin Barley has taken a vow to track him out; and he will be sure to do it, sooner or later. We will go down, Miss Hereford."

The policeman had not come upon the business at all, but about some poaching matter. Mr. Edwin Barley came out of his wife's room as we were creeping by it. Charlotte Delves asked if Mrs. Edwin was awake?

"Awake? Yes! and in a fine excitable state," he answered, irritably. "She does not sleep three minutes together. It is giving herself no chance of recovery. She has got it in her head now that she's going to die, and has sent for Martin."

He strode down to the waiting policeman. Charlotte Delves went into Mrs. Edwin Barley's room, and took me. Selina's cheeks were still hectic with fever; her blue eyes bright and wild.

"If you would but try to calm yourself, Mrs. Edwin Barley!"

"I am as calm as I can expect to be," was her answer, given with some petulance. "My husband need not talk; he's worse than I am. He says now the doctors are treating me wrongly, and that he shall call in a fresh one. I suppose I shall die between them."

"I wish I knew what would soothe you," spoke Charlotte Delves, in a kind, pleasant voice.

"I'm very thirsty; I've drank all the lemonade; you can fetch me up some more. Anne, do you stay here."

Charlotte Delves took down the lemonade waiter, and Selina drew me to her. "The message, Anne!—the message! Did you see Mr. Gregg?"

I gave her the message as I had received it. It was well, she said, and turned away from me in her restlessness.

And again a day passed on, bringing no change.

I had another walk to Hallam on the Friday. Philip King's funeral was to be on the Saturday, and the walk appeared to have some connection with that event. Selina sent no note this time, but a mysterious message.

"See Mr. Gregg alone as before, Anne," were the orders. "Tell him that the funeral is fixed for eleven o'clock to-morrow morning, and he must be at hand, and watch his time. You can mention that I am now too ill to write."

"Tell him—what do you say, Selina?"

"Exactly what I have told you; he will understand, though you do not. Why do you make me speak? I send you in preference to a servant on this private business."

I did not see Selina again that day. It was said in the household that she was a trifle better. Mr. Edwin Barley had been as good as his word, and a third doctor attended now, a solemn old gentleman in black dress clothes and gold spectacles. It transpired, no one but Miss Delves knowing with what truth, that he agreed with his two brethren in the treatment they had pursued.

Saturday morning. The house woke up to a quiet bustle. People

were going and coming, servants were moving about and preparing, all in a subdued, decorous manner. The servants had been put in mourning,—Mr. Edwin Barley was all in black, and Charlotte Delves rustled from room to room in rich black silk. Philip King had been related to her in a very distant degree. Mrs. Edwin Barley was no worse; better, if anything, the doctors said. From what could be gathered by us, who were not doctors, the throat was a trifle better; she herself weaker.

The funeral was late. The clocks were striking eleven as it wound down the avenue on its way to the church; an old-fashioned little structure, situate at right angles between the house and Hallam. In the first black chariot sat the clergyman, Mr. Martin; then followed the hearse; then two mourning-coaches. In the first were Mr. Edwin Barley, his brother, and two gentlemen whom I did not know—they were the mourners; in the other were the six pall-bearers. Some men walked in hat-bands, and the carriages were drawn by four horses, bearing plumes.

"Is it out of sight, Anne?"

The questioner was my aunt, for it was at her window I stood, peeping beside the blind. It had been out of sight some minutes, I told her, and must have passed the lodge.

"Then you go down-stairs, Anne, and open the hall-door. Stand there until Mr. Gregg comes; he will have a clerk with him: bring them up here. Do all this quietly, child."

In five minutes Mr. Gregg came, a young man accompanying him. I shut the hall-door and took them up-stairs. They trod so softly! just as though they would avoid being heard. Selina held out her hand to Mr. Gregg.

"How are you to-day, Mrs. Barley?"

"They say I am better," she replied; "I hope I am. Is it quite ready?"

"Quite," said he, taking a parchment from one of his pockets. "You will hear it read?"

"Yes; that I may see whether you understood my imperfect letter. I hope it is not long. The church, you know, is not so far off; they will be back soon."

"It is quite short," Mr. Gregg replied, having bent his ear to catch her speech, for she spoke low and imperfectly. "Where shall my clerk wait while I read it?"

She sent us into her dressing-room, the clerk and I, whence we could hear Mr. Gregg's voice slowly reading something, but could not distinguish the words or sense; once I caught the name "Anne Ursula Hereford." And then we were called in again.

"Anne, go down-stairs and find Jemima," were the next orders. "Bring her up here."

"Is it to give her her medicine?" asked Jemima, as she followed me up.

"I don't know."

"My girl," began the attorney to Jemima, "can you be discreet, and hold your tongue?"

Jemima stared very much: first at seeing them there, next at the question. She gave no answer in her surprise, and Mrs. Edwin Barley made a sign that she should come close to her.

"Jemima, I am sure you know that I have been a good mistress to you, and I ask you to render me a slight service in return. In my present state of health, I have thought it necessary to make my will; to devise away the trifle of property I possess of my own. I am about to sign it, and you and Mr. Gregg's clerk will witness my signature. The service I require of you is, that you will not speak of this to any one. Can I rely upon you?"

"Yes, ma'am, certainly you may," replied the servant, speaking in an earnest tone: and she evidently meant to keep her word honestly.

"And my clerk I have answered to you for," put in Mr. Gregg, as he raised Mrs. Barley and placed the open parchment before her.

She signed her name, "Selina Barley;" the clerk signed his, "William Dixon;" and Jemima hers, "Jemima Lea." Mr. Gregg remarked that Jemima's writing *might* be read, and it was as much as could be said of it. She quitted the room, and soon afterwards Mr. Gregg and his clerk took their departure in the same quiet manner that they had come.

I was closing the hall-door after them, when the sound of silk, rustling up, fell on my startled ears, and Charlotte Delves stepped into the hall from one of the passages. She had been shut up in her parlour.

"Who is it that has gone out?"

But I was already half way up to Selina's room, and would not hear. Miss Delves opened the door and looked after them. And at that moment Jemima appeared. Charlotte Delves laid hold of her, and no doubt turned her inside out.

"Anne, my dear, if I die you are now provided for. At least ——"

"Oh, Selina! Selina! You cannot be going to die!"

"Perhaps not. I hope not. Yes, I do hope it, Anne, in spite of my fancied warning—which, I suppose, was only a dream, after all. My mind must have dwelt on what you said about Ursula. If you ever relate to me anything of the sort again, Anne, I'll beat you."

I stood conscience-stricken. But in telling her what I did, I had only obeyed my mother. I like to repeat this over and over.

"At least, as well provided for as I have it in my power to provide," she continued, just as though there had been no interruption. "I have left you my four thousand pounds. It is out at good interest—five per cent.; and I have directed it to accumulate until you are eighteen. Then it goes to you. This will just keep you; just be enough to keep

you from going out as a governess. If I live, you will have your home with me after leaving school. Of course, that governess scheme was all a farce; Ursula could only have meant it as such. The world would stare to see a governess in a grand-daughter of Carew of Keppe Carew."

The will lay on the bed. She told me to lock it up in the opposite cabinet, taking the keys from underneath the pillow, and I obeyed her. By her directions, I took the cabinet key off the bunch, locked it up alone in a drawer, and she returned the bunch underneath her pillow. By that time she could not speak at all. Charlotte Delves, who came up, asked what she had been doing to reduce herself like that.

It was a miserable day. Mr. Edwin Barley did not seem to know what to do with himself, and the other people had gone home. Mr. Martin was alone with Selina for a portion of the afternoon. In the evening she appeared considerably better. She sat up in bed, and ate a few spoonfuls of arrow-root. Mr. Edwin Barley, who was in the arm-chair near the fire, said it was poor stuff, and she ought to take either brandy or wine, or both.

"Let me give you some in that, Selina," he cried. And indeed he had been wanting to give it her all along.

"I should be afraid to take it; don't tease me," she feebly answered, and it was astonishing how low her voice was getting. "You know what the doctors say, Edwin. When once the inflammation (or whatever it is) in the throat has passed, then I may be fed up every hour. Perhaps they will let me begin to-morrow."

"If they don't mind, they'll keep you so low that—that we shall have to give you a bottle of brandy a-day." I think the concluding words, after the pause, had been quite changed from what he had been going to say, and he spoke half-jokingly. "I know that the proper treatment for you would have been stimulants. I told Lowe so again to-day, but he would not have it. But for one thing, I'd take the case into my own hands, and give you a wine-glass of brandy now."

"And that one thing?" she asked, in her scarcely perceptible voice.

"The doubt that I *might* do wrong."

Jemima appeared at the door with a candle: it was my signal. Selina kissed me twice, and said she should be up on the morrow. I went round to Mr. Edwin Barley.

"Good night, sir."

"Is it your bed-time, child? Good night."

CHAPTER VI.

DEAD !

EIGHT o'clock the next morning, and the church-bells ringing out on the sunshiny air ! Everything looked joyous as I drew up the blind—kept down for a week previously. I dressed myself, without waiting for *Jemima*, in my Sunday frock, with its deep crape trimmings. The house would be open again to-day ; *Selina* be sitting up.

I scrambled over my dressing ; I fear I scrambled over my prayers. Everything was so still below I thought they had forgotten me. Going down, I knocked at *Selina's* door, and was waiting to hear her answer, when one of the maids came running up the stairs in a flurry. It was *Sarah*.

"You cannot go in there, Miss Hereford."

"I want to see how my aunt is."

"Oh, she—she—you must not go in, miss, I say. Your aunt cannot see you just now ; you must please go down into Miss Delves's parlour."

I dropped the handle of the door in obedience, and went down a few steps. *Sarah* went on to the upper flights. But the girl's manner had alarmed me ; and, without any thought of doing wrong, I softly opened the door. The curtains were drawn closely round the bed.

"Are you worse, *Selina* ?"

No reply came, and I feared she was worse. Perhaps lying with leeches to her throat ? I had seen leeches to a throat once, and had never forgotten the sight. At that moment the appearance of the room struck upon me as strange. *It seemed to have been put to rights.* I pulled open the curtain in full dread of the leeches.

Alas ! it was not leeches I saw ; but a still, white face. The face of my Aunt *Selina*, it is true, but—dead. I shrieked out, in my shock of terror, and flew into the arms of *Sarah*, who came running in.

"What is the matter ?" exclaimed Charlotte Delves, flying up to the landing where we stood.

"Why, Miss Hereford has been in there ; and I told her not to go !" answered *Sarah*, hushing my face to her as she spoke. "Why couldn't you listen to me, miss ?"

"I didn't know Miss Hereford was up ; she should have waited for *Jemima*," said Charlotte Delves, as she laid hold of me, and led me down to her parlour.

"Oh, Miss Delves, Miss Delves, what is it ?" I sobbed. "Is she really dead ?"

"She is dead, all too certain, my dear. But I am very sorry you should have gone in. It is just like *Jemima's* carelessness !"

"What's that?—that's like my carelessness, Miss Delves?" resentfully inquired Jemima, who had come forward on hearing the noise.

"Why, your suffering this child to dress herself alone, and go about the house at large. One would think you might have been attentive this morning, of all others."

"I went up just before eight, and she was asleep," answered Jemima, with as pert an accent as she dared to use. "Who was to imagine she'd awake and be down so soon?"

"Why did she die? what killed her?" I asked, my sobs choking me. "Dead! *dead!* My Aunt Selina dead!"

"She was taken worse at eleven o'clock last night, and Mr. Lowe was sent for," explained Charlotte Delves. "He could do nothing, and she died at two."

"Where was Mr. Edwin Barley?"

"He was with her."

"Not when she was taken worse," interposed Jemima. "I was with her alone. It was my turn to sit up, and she had spoken quite cheerfully to me. Before settling myself in the arm-chair, I went to see if she had dropped asleep. My patience!—my heart went pit-a-pat at the change in her. I ran for Mr. Edwin Barley, and he came in. Mr. Lowe was sent for: everything was done, but she could not be saved."

I turned to Charlotte Delves in my sad distress. "She was so much better last night," I said, imploringly. "She was getting well."

"It was a deceitful improvement," replied Charlotte Delves—and she seemed really sad and grieved. "Lowe said he could have told us so had he been here. Mr. Edwin Barley quite flew out at him, avowing his belief that it was the medical treatment that had killed her."

"And was it?" I eagerly asked, as if, the point ascertained, it could bring her back to life. "Do they know what she died of?"

"As to knowing, I don't think any of them know too much," answered Charlotte Delves. "The doctors say the disorder, together with the shock her system had received, could not be subdued. Mr. Edwin Barley says it could have been, under a different treatment. Lowe tells me now he had little hope from the first."

"And couldn't open his lips to say so!" interposed Jemima. "It's just like those doctors. The master is dreadfully cut up."

They tried to make me take some breakfast, but I could neither eat nor drink. Jemima said they had had theirs "ages ago." None of the household had been to bed since the alarm.

"All I know is, that if blame lies anywhere it is with the doctors," observed Charlotte Delves, as she pressed me to eat. "Every direction they gave was minutely followed."

"Why did nobody fetch me down to see her?"

"Child, she never asked for you; she was past thinking of things. And to you it would only have been a painful sight."

"That's true," added Jemima. "When I looked at her, all unconcerned, I saw death in her face. It frightened me, I can tell you. I ran to call the master, thinking ——"

"Thinking what?" spoke Charlotte Delves, for Jemima had made a sudden pause.

"Nothing particular, Miss Delves. Only that something which had happened in the day was odd," added Jemima, glancing significantly at me. "The master was in his room half undressed, and he came rushing after me just as he was. The minute he looked on her he murmured that she was dying, and sent off a man for Mr. Lowe, and another for the old doctor from Nettleby. Lowe came at once, but the other did not get here till it was over. She died at two."

Jemima would have told me the details for ever. I felt sick as I listened. Even now, as I write, a sort of sickness of remembrance comes over me. I wandered into the hall, and was sobbing, with my head against the dining-room door-post, not knowing any one was there, when Mr. Edwin Barley gently unlatched the door and looked out.

He had been weeping, as was easy to be seen. His eyes were red—his air and manner subdued; but my acquired fear of him was in full force, and I would rather have gone away than been drawn in.

"Child, don't cry so."

"I never took leave of her, sir. I did not see her before she died."

"If weeping tears of blood would bring her back to life, she'd be here again," he responded, almost fiercely. "They have killed her between them; they have, Anne; and, by heavens! if there was any law to touch them, they should feel it."

"Who, sir?"

"The doctors. And precious doctors they have proved themselves! Why do you tremble so, child? They have not understood the disorder from the first: it is one requiring the utmost possible help from stimulants; otherwise the system cannot battle with it. They gave her none; they kept her upon water, and—she is lying there? Oh! that I had done as it perpetually crossed my mind to do!" he continued, clasping his hands together in anguish; "that I had taken her treatment upon myself, risking the responsibility! She would have been living now!"

If ever a man spoke the genuine sentiments of his heart, Mr. Edwin Barley appeared to do so then, and a little bit of my dislike of him subsided—just a shade of it, no more.

"I am sorry you should have come into the house at this time, my poor child; some spell seems to have been upon it ever since. Go now to Charlotte Delves; tell her I say she is to take good care of you."

He shut himself in again as I went away. Oh, the restless day! the miserable day! That, and the one of mamma's death remain still upon my memory as the two sad epochs of my life, standing out conspicuously in their bitterness.

Moving about the house restlessly ; shedding tears by turns ; leaning my head on the sofa in Miss Delves's parlour ! She was very kind to me ; but what was any kindness to me then ? It seemed to me that I could never, never be happy again. I had so loved Selina !

I wanted to see her again. It was almost as if I had *not* seen her in the morning, for the shock of surprise had startled away my senses. I had looked upon mamma so many times after death, that the customary dread of childhood at such sights lingered but little with me. And I began to watch for an opportunity to go in.

It came at twilight. In passing the room I saw the door open, and supposed some of the maids might be there. In I went, bravely ; and passed round to the far side of the bed, nearest to the window and the fading light.

But I had not courage to draw aside the curtain quite at first, and sat down for a moment in the low chair by the bed's head, to wait until courage came. Some one else came first ; and that was Mr. Edwin Barley.

He walked slowly in, carrying a candle, startling me nearly to sickness. His slippers were light, and I had not heard his approach. It must have been he who had left the door open, probably having been to fetch the very candle in his hand. He did not come near the bed, at least on the side where I was, but seemed to be searching for something ; looking about, opening two or three drawers. I sat cowering, feeling I had no business to be there ; my heart was in my mouth when he went to the door and called Charlotte Delves.

"Where are my wife's keys ?" he inquired, as she came up.

"I do not know," was her answer ; and she began to look about the room as he had previously done. "They must be somewhere."

"Not know ! But it was your place to take possession of them, Charlotte. I want to examine her desk ; there may be directions left in it, for all I can tell."

"I really forgot all about the keys," Charlotte Delves deprecatingly said. "I will ask the women who were here. Why ! here they are ; in this china basket on the mantelpiece," she suddenly exclaimed. "I knew they could not be far off."

Mr. Edwin Barley took the keys, and went out, the desk under his arm. Charlotte followed him, and closed the door. But I was too much scared to attempt to remain ; I softly opened it, and stole out after them, waiting against the wall in the shade. They had halted at the door of Mr. Barley's study, half way down the stairs, and were talking in subdued tones. Charlotte Delves was telling him of the lawyer's visit on the previous day.

"I did not mention it before," she observed : "of course, while poor Mrs. Edwin was here, it was not my business to report on anything she might do, and to-day has had too much trouble in it. But there's

no doubt that Gregg was here, and a clerk with him. Little Miss Hereford showed them out, and I suppose admitted them. It was an odd time to choose for the visit—the hour of the funeral.”

Can you imagine how terrified I felt as Charlotte Delves related this? I had done no wrong; I had simply obeyed the orders of Mrs. Edwin Barley; but it was uncertain what amount of blame her husband might lay to my share, and how he would punish it.

“It is strange what Gregg could be doing here at that time with a clerk; and in private, as you appear to assume,” said Mr. Edwin Barley. “Could he have come by appointment, to transact any legal business for Selina?”

“But if so, why should she wish it kept from you?” and Charlotte Delves’s voice had a jealous ring in it: jealous for the rights of her cousin, Edwin Barley.

“I don’t know. The little girl may be able to explain. Call her up.”

Another fright for me. But the next moment his voice countermanded the order.

“Never mind, Charlotte; let it be. When I want information of Anne Hereford, I’ll question her myself. And if Selina did anything, made a will, or gave Gregg any other directions, we shall soon know of it.”

“Made a will!” exclaimed Charlotte Delves.

“I should not think it likely that she would, but she could do it; she was of age,” replied Mr. Barley.

He went into his study with the desk, and Charlotte Delves passed down stairs. I got into her parlour as soon as she did; never having seen my dear Aunt Selina.

But they took me to see her the next day, when she was in her first coffin. She looked very calm and peaceful: but I think the dead, generally speaking, do look peaceful: whether they have died a happy death or not. A few autumn flowers were strewed upon her flannel shroud.

In coming out of the room, my face streaming with tears, there stood Mr. Lowe.

“Oh, sir!” I cried, in my burst of grief, “what made her die? Could you not have saved her?”

“My little girl, what she really died of was exhaustion,” he answered. “The disease took hold of her, and she could not rally from it. As to saving her—God alone could have done that.”

There was no inquest this time. The doctors certified to some cause of death. The house was more closely shut up than before; the servants went about speaking in whispers; deeper mourning was prepared for them. In Selina’s desk a paper had been found by Mr. Edwin Barley—a few pencilled directions on it, should she “unhappily die.” Therefore the prevision of death had been really upon her. She

named two or three persons whom she should wish to attend her funeral, Mr. Gregg being one of them.

Saturday again, and another funeral! Ever since, even to this hour, Saturdays and funerals have been connected together in my impressionable mind. I had a pleasant dream early that morning. I saw Selina in bright white robes, looking peacefully happy, saying that her sins had been washed away by Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. I had sobbed myself to sleep, hoping that they had.

It was fixed for twelve o'clock this time. The long procession, longer than the other one had been, wound down the avenue. Mr. Edwin Barley went in a coach by himself; perhaps he did not like to be seen grieving; and three or four coaches followed it. There was not a dry eye amidst the household—us who were left at home—with the exception of Charlotte Delves. I did not see her weep at all, then or previously. The narrow crape tucks on her gown were exchanged for wide ones, and some black love-ribbon mingled with her hair. I sobbed till they came back, sitting by myself in the dining-room.

It was the very room they filed into, those who entered. A formidable array, in their sweeping scarves and hat-bands; too formidable for me to pass, and I shrunk into the far corner, between the sideboard and the dumb-waiter. But they began to leave again, only just saying good day in a low tone to Mr. Edwin Barley, and got into the coaches that waited. Mr. Gregg, the lawyer, remained, and Mr. Barley of the Oaks.

"Pardon me that I stay," observed the lawyer to Mr. Edwin Barley; "I am but obeying the request of your late wife. She charged me, in the event of her death, to stay and read the will after the funeral."

"The will!" echoed Mr. Edwin Barley.

"She made a will just before she died. She gave me instructions for it privately; though what her motives for keeping it a secret were, she did not state. It was executed on the day previous to her death."

"This is news to me," observed Mr. Edwin Barley. "Do you hold the will?"

"No, I left it with her. You had better remain, my little girl," the lawyer added to me, touching my arm with his black glove as I was essaying to quit the room. "The will concerns you. I asked your wife, sir, if I should take possession of it, but she preferred to keep it herself."

"I do not know where it can have been put, then," returned Mr. Edwin Barley. "I have examined her desk and one or two of her drawers where she kept papers; but I have found no will."

"Perhaps you did not look particularly for a will, not knowing she had made one, and so it may have escaped your notice, sir," suggested the lawyer.

"Pardon me; it was the precise thing I looked for. I heard of your visit to my wife; not, however, until after her death; and it struck me

that your coming might have reference to something of the sort. But I found no will ; only a few pencilled words on a half-sheet of paper in her desk. Do you know where it was put ?”

The lawyer turned to me. “ Perhaps this little lady may know,” he said. “ She made one in the room when I was with Mrs. Edwin Barley, and may have seen afterwards where the will was placed.”

Again I felt sick with apprehension : few children at my age have ever been so shy and sensitive. It seemed to me that all was coming out ; at any rate, my share in it. But I spoke pretty bravely.

“ You mean the paper that you left on my Aunt Selina’s bed, sir ? I put it in the cabinet ; she directed me to do so.”

“ In the cabinet ?” repeated Mr. Edwin Barley to me.

“ Yes, sir. Just inside as you open it.”

“ Will you go with me to search for it ?” said Mr. Edwin Barley to the lawyer. “ And you can go into Miss Delves’s parlour, Anne ; little girls are better out of these affairs.”

“ Pardon me,” dissented Mr. Gregg. “ Miss Hereford, as the only interested party, had better remain. And if she can show us where the will is, it will save time.”

Mr. Edwin Barley looked as if he meant to object, but did not. “ The child’s nerves have been unhinged,” he said to the lawyer as we went up stairs.

The key of the cabinet lay in the corner of the drawer where I had placed it. Mr. Edwin Barley took it from me and opened the cabinet. But no will was to be seen.

“ I did not think of looking here,” he observed ; “ my wife never used the cabinet, to my knowledge. There is no will here.”

There was no will anywhere, apparently. Drawers were opened ; her desk, standing now on the drawers, was searched ; all without effect.

“ It is very extraordinary,” said Mr. Gregg.

“ I can only come to one conclusion—that my wife must have destroyed it herself. It is true, the keys were lying about for several hours subsequent to her death, at anybody’s command ; but who would steal a will ?”

“ I do not suppose Mrs. Edwin Barley would destroy it,” dissented Mr. Gregg. “ Nothing can be more improbable. She expressed her happiness at having been able to make a will ; her great satisfaction. Who left the keys about, sir ?”

“ The blame of that lies with Charlotte Delves. It escaped her memory to secure them, she tells me : and in the confusion of the sudden blow, it is not to be wondered at. But and if the keys were left about ? I have honest people in my house, Mr. Gregg.”

“ Who benefited by the will ?” asked Mr. Barley of the Oaks, he having intruded on the search, and was looking on with a face of puzzled concern. “ Who comes into the money, Gregg ?”

"This little girl, Anne Ursula Hereford. Mrs. Edwin Barley bequeathed to her the whole of her money, and her trinkets, except the trinkets that had been your own gift to her, Mr. Edwin Barley." And he proceeded to detail the provisions of the short will. "In fact, she left to Miss Hereford everything she had to leave. It is most strange where the will can be."

"It is more than strange," observed Mr. Edwin Barley. "Why did she wish to make it in secret?"

"I have told you, sir, that she did not say why."

"But can't you form an idea why?"

"It occurred to me that she thought you might not like her leaving all she had away from you and might have feared you would interfere."

"No," he quietly said, "I should not have done that. Every wish that she confided to me should have been scrupulously carried out."

"Oh, but come, you know! a big sheet of parchment, sealed and inscribed, can't vanish in this way," exclaimed Mr. Barley of the Oaks. "It must be somewhere in the room."

It might be, but nobody could find it. Mr. Barley of the Oaks got quite excited and angry. He went to the door, calling out for Miss Delves.

"Charlotte, come up here. Do you hear, Charlotte?"

She ran up quickly, evidently wondering.

"Look here," cried Mr. Barley, "Mrs. Edwin's will can't be found. It was left in this cabinet, my brother is told."

"Oh, then, Mrs. Edwin did make a will?" was the response of Charlotte Delves.

"Yes; but it is gone," repeated Mr. Barley of the Oaks.

"It cannot be gone," said Charlotte. "If the will was left in the cabinet, there it would be now."

The old story was gone over again; nothing more. The will had been made, and as certainly placed there. The servants were honest, not capable of meddling with that or anything else. But there was no sign or symptom of a will left.

"It is very strange," exclaimed Mr. Edwin Barley, looking furtively from the corner of his black eyes at most of us in succession, as if we were in league against him or against the will. "I will have the house searched throughout."

but it was done that same evening. Himself, his brother, Mr. Gregg, and Charlotte Delves taking part in it. Entirely without success.

And in my busy heart there was running a conviction all the while that Mr. Edwin Barley had himself made away with it.

"Will you not act in accordance with its provisions, sir?" Mr. Gregg asked him as he was leaving.

"I do not think I shall," said Mr. Edwin Barley. "Produce the

will, and every behest in it shall be fulfilled. Failing a will, my wife's property becomes mine, and I shall act as I please by it."

The days went by ; ten unhappy days. I spent most of my time with Miss Delves, seeing scarcely anything of Mr. Edwin Barley. Part of the time I think he was over at his brother's, but now and then I met him in the passages or the hall. He would give me a nod, and pass by. I cannot describe my state of feeling, or how miserable the house appeared to me : I was as one unsettled in it, as one who lived in constant discomfort, fear, and dread ; though of what, I could not define. Jemima remarked one day that "Miss Hereford went about moithered, like a fish out of water."

The will did not turn up, and probably never would ; neither was any clue given to the mystery of its disappearance. Meanwhile rumours of its loss grew rife in the household and in the neighbourhood : whether the lawyer talked, or whether Mr. Barley of the Oaks, and thus set them afloat, was uncertain, but it was thought to have been one or the other. I know I had said nothing ; Charlotte Delves said she had not ; neither, beyond doubt, had Mr. Edwin Barley. When an acquaintance once asked him whether the report was true, he answered Yes, it was true so far as that Mr. Gregg said his late wife had made a will, and it could not be found ;" but his own belief was, that she must have destroyed it again ; he could not suspect any of the household would tamper with its mistress's private affairs.

One day Mr. Edwin Barley called me to him.

"Are you quite sure," he asked, in his sternest tone, "that you did not re-open the cabinet yourself, and do something with the parchment?"

"I never opened it again, sir. If I had, my aunt must have seen me. And I could not have done so," I added, recollecting myself, "for she kept the bunch of keys under her pillow."

"She was the only one, though, who knew where it was placed," muttered Mr. Edwin Barley to himself in allusion to me.

"It's a queer start about that will !" Jemima resentfully remarked that same night when she was undressing me. "And I don't half like it ; I can tell you that, Miss Hereford. They may turn round on me next, and say I made away with it."

"That's not likely, Jemima. The will would not do you any good. Do you think it will ever be found?"

"It's to be hoped it will—with all this unpleasantness ! I wish I never come within hearing of it, for my part. The day old Gregg and the young man were here, Charlotte Delves got hold of me, pumping me on this side, pumping me on that. Had they been up to Mrs. Edwin Barley ? she asked ; and what had their business been with her ? She didn't get much out of me, but it made me as cross as two sticks. It is droll where the will can have gone ! One can't suspect Mr. Edwin

Barley of touching it; and I don't; but the loss makes him all the richer. That's the way of the world," concluded Jemima: "the more money one has, the more one gets added to it. It is said that he comes into possession of forty thousand pounds by the death of Philip King."

The ten days' sojourn in the desolate house ended, and then Charlotte Delves told me I was to leave it. In consequence of the death of Selina, the trustees had assigned to Mrs. Hemson the task of choosing a school for me. Mrs. Hemson had fixed on one near to the town where she resided, Dashleigh; and I was to pass a week at Mrs. Hemson's house before entering it.

On the evening previous to my departure a message came from Mr. Edwin Barley that I was to go to him in the dining-room. Charlotte Delves smoothed my hair with her fingers, and sent me in. He was at dessert: fruit and wine were on the table; and John set a chair for me. Mr. Edwin Barley put some walnuts that he cracked and a bunch of grapes on my plate.

"Will you take some wine, little girl?"

"No, thank you, sir. I have just had tea."

Presently he put a small box into my hands. I remembered having seen it on Selina's dressing-table.

"It contains a few of your Aunt Selina's trinkets," he said. "All she brought here, except a necklace, which is of value, and will be forwarded with some of her more costly clothes to Mrs. Hemson for you. Do you think you can take care of these until you are of an age to wear them?"

"I will take great care of them, sir. I will lock them up in the little desk mamma gave me, and I wear the key of it round my neck."

"Mind you do take care of them," he rejoined, with suppressed emotion. "If I thought you would not, I would never give them to you. You must treasure them always. And these things, recollect, are of value," he added, touching the box; "they are not child's toys. Take them up-stairs, and put them in your trunk."

"If you please, sir, has the will been found?" I waited to ask.

"It has not. Why?"

"Because, sir, you asked me if I had taken it; you said I was the only one who knew where it had been put. Indeed, I would not have touched it for anything."

"Be easy, little girl. I believe my wife herself destroyed the will: but I live in hopes of coming to the bottom of the mystery yet. As you have introduced the subject, you shall hear a word upon it from me. Busybodies have given me hints that I ought to carry out its substance in spite of the loss. I do not think so. The will, and what I hear connected with its making, has angered me, look you, Anne Hereford. Had my wife only breathed half a word to me that she wished you to have her money, every shilling should be yours. But I

don't like the underhand work that went on in regard to it, and shall hold it precisely as though it had never existed. If I ever relent in your favour, it will not be yet awhile."

"I did not know she was going to leave me anything, indeed, sir."

"Just so, little girl. But it was you who undertook the communications to Gregg, it seems, and admitted him when he came. You all acted as if I were an ogre, who would have prevented it. That's all, child. And now, good-bye: I shall not see you in the morning."

"Good-bye, sir," I answered. And he shook hands with me for the first time.

(*To be continued.*)

ROOM FOR HIS LORDSHIP.

A CHARADE.

BY THE DEAN OF CANTERBURY.

Room for his Lordship! up the street
Full stately roll the well-fed bays,
As, all in trim their chief to meet,
Our town its ghostly staff displays:
And thus, with ritual and procession,
My *first* is yielded in possession.

Room for his Lordship! through the crowd
The message all unheeded fares;
Amid the buzz of voices loud,
Not one perceives, and no one cares:
For men regard, in railway throng,
My *second* only, right or wrong.

Room for his Lordship! German spas
In vain have done their best to save;
So, grasped in Death's relentless claws,
He back must travel o'er the wave,
In oaken chest, a soulless thing,
Grim burden for my *third* to bring.

Room for his Lordship! where, and how?
His titles and his rank are past;
His splendid talents count not now,
For Heaven's own doom is come at last
Unless his soul be cleansed from sin,
Not e'en my *whole* will let him in.

THE LAST FOUR YEARS IN ABYSSINIA.

BY ONE OF THE CAPTIVES.

THIS long period of suffering, if it has not made the captives wiser and better men, ought at least to have schooled them to such hardships, privations, and troubles, as, happily, seldom fall to the lot of civilized beings. Galling chains, a narrow cell, and bullying guards, may be very dreadful in England; but those who have graduated in a Habesh prison become hardened, if not impervious, to the severity of such a discipline. Now and then, it is true, the clanking fetters press a little too much on the wasted ankles; but the pleasure, some may term it sad pleasure, of swathing the aching wounds, as far as the tight and massive rings permit, in soft well-worn rags, compensates for the transitory pain they produce. This indifference and insensibility to suffering, so long as it does not degenerate into a kind of criminal stoicism, is, perhaps, next to a confiding faith in an unerring Providence, the best antidote against that morbid brooding over events which no one could anticipate, and misfortune it was almost impossible to avert. The tyrant from the beginning so well arranged his plans, and concerted his subtle scheme, that the actors in the fearful drama were ignorant of the design, and the captives were consequently gulled by the smooth tongue of the crafty barbarian.

It is, however, of no use to retrace the past, and to dilate on wrongs that make the blood boil, and the head throb, and the heart turn sick with hope deferred. Thank God! the tide has turned, and a bow of hope glitters on the clouds which fling their dark shadows athwart the prison precincts.

It was in July, 1863, that the hypocritical despot (who told Mr. Rassam on his arrival that words could not express his gratitude to the English for having given Abyssinia the Bible in its vernacular tongue) rejoined, to the request of a missionary for a written order to exempt the Scriptures from the annoyance of the toll-collectors, "We are sick of the books, and don't want them." He was then in the year of his power; and in his presumptuous arrogance he imagined himself perfectly invincible.

Christia Agafer, and Alafa, near the Lake Tsana, had, on account of a suspected sympathy with the disaffected, been severely chastized; Alasnee, a chief under the Godjam rebel Tadla Gwalu, in a battle near Agow, had lost a considerable army; and Kasai, a lowland pretender to

the crown, was on his way to Gondar, when by the King's own hands he suffered the penalty of his treason. Success, then, everywhere attended the royal troops; and the infatuated man, in the flush of victory and triumph, almost began to believe that he was in reality the "Theodoros" (God's gift) of Ethiopian prophecy. His army, which then numbered more than 150,000 fighting warriors, was devoted to his interest, and implicitly obedient to his will. "I am the bareea (slave) of the Negus (king)," rung through the air from morning till night, and from night till morning; nay, the very adulations of some were so extravagant that they bordered on shuddering blasphemies.

The incense of flattery, so profusely offered before the shrine of the black Moloch, inflated his heart, and added a continual supply of fresh fuel to his insatiable lust of wealth, glory, and dominion. The poor peasants, who were already taxed beyond their limited means, had to submit to new exactions; and when goaded to desperation, a few here and there sought refuge from the spoliating despot's myrmidons in the ravines and hills of the lowlands. The entire district, or province, was pronounced disloyal, and mulcted in an amount that involved a general confiscation of property. Gondar had to suffer for none of these offences, but for others of equal magnitude. Although that province belonged to the Abuna (Metropolitan bishop), and was a prosperous place—a sin that royal justice could not allow to remain unpunished—the spacious houses of the Abuna must be plundered, the well-stored godahs (granaries) must supply the wants of the army; and even the church (consecrated to the mortal remains of successive Metropolitans), must be deprived of the priestly vestments and sacred vessels.

The love of rapine and plunder once instilled into the breast of the lawless savages, could not so easily be eradicated; and to find the means of gratifying his own craving will, it became indispensable to proscribe riches in the churchman and the people, and to show them that poverty in their case was no crime. This the whole of Dembea, down to the insalubrious valleys of the Soudan (the Egyptian border), had ere long experienced in its utmost rigour.

During the pillage no one was killed, but all the village shums (governors), were seized; and in order to extort money, subjected to the most excruciating tortures. Thus a whole region, renowned for the fertility of its soil and the luxuriance of its crops, was sacrificed to the rapacity of the capricious tyrant. Homes abounding with the comforts of life were ravaged and destroyed; fields waving with yellow harvests were torn up or trampled under foot; and pastures, swarming with grazing flocks and herds, were turned into deserts and untenanted wilds.

This unjustifiable spoliation of a fair and beautiful province, although greatly admired and applauded by the hungry legions of Tigré and Lasta, met with no approval among those whose country lay nearer, and might one day share a similar fate. Broundo (raw meat), hydromc-

(mead), and tinkling Maria Theresa dollars, have palliated the Negus's severity with his rapacious followers, and the groans, shrieks, and lamentations of tortured shums fell on the wakeful ear during the midnight hours, intermingling with the boisterous revelry of bragging and drunken soldiers, the slaying and slaughter of the stolen beeves, rapidly diminishing in size, and with it the squadrons' fervour and devotion to the throne of the great King.

Had the crowned robber not united to his other wonderful qualities those of a speculator in cattle, the ardour of his followers might have been kept up to a moderate height ; but to dispose of the herds confiscated in one province to purchasers in another, with the obvious intention of plundering them again for the market of another, and perhaps still a third, staggered even their dull and unreasoning intellects ; and vast multitudes deserted to the swelling ranks of the rebels. The Shoa tribute, which about that time came in, cowered the strong, and fortified the confidence of the wavering and timid.

A quarrel with the bishop, and detention of the delegates from the south, again excited some misapprehension, but his Majesty's audacious confession that he had acted under the maddening influence of ardent spirits, was deemed an ample apology for the few misdeeds he had committed, not including the tortures inflicted upon the Frenshush (Europeans), in which he had indulged to no small extent.

The Shoa chiefs, after many procrastinations and ominous delays, received peremptory orders to depart for their respective governments, where, at the peril of their lives, they were to levy a fresh impost to supply the wants of their Negus (king). The haughty chiefs, without betraying their sentiments, humbly promised to obey the royal command ; but no sooner did they touch their native soil, than they threw off their allegiance, and, together with their people, joined Beseppa, till then an insignificant rebel chief, in proclaiming their independence. Tidings of this revolution reached the tyrant at Debra Tabor, and accelerated his departure for the South. Small-pox, famine, and desertion had made sad inroads into his army, and reduced its numbers to one-half of the amount that lately covered the wide-spreading plains around Gondar (the capital) ; and it was generally believed, though no one ventured to express his thoughts, that the campaign would prove a failure.

The rebellion in Shoa had a reflective influence on the turbulent Wollo-Gallas—those proud and martial highlanders—who, confident in their prowess, and the unfailing flight of their spears, were seldom, if ever, diverted from their intestine broils by a foreign assault. Hated by their bigoted neighbours, the Shoas, and very often sought in alliance by the pusillanimous Amharas, these Wollo-Gallas, ignorant and fanatical adherents of the prophet Mahomet as they were, enjoyed, on their lofty plains, and bleak mountains, the felicitous position of opposing an

impassable barrier to a conflict between the two Christian rulers of Ethiopia, King Theodorus and the King of Shoa. King Theodorus, however, undaunted by the bristling lances of the revilers of the Cross, like the impetuous mountain-torrents which irrigate their verdant plateaux, unexpectedly rushed upon them, scattering death, ruin, and desolation over scenes which for years had not been trodden by an Amharic warrior. Prompted by an innate yearning for pillage and bloodshed, and, in the present instance, with an implacable animosity, the ruffianly hordes of the Negus unsparingly inflicted on young and old, the strong and the weak, the most brutal atrocities. The villages were plundered and burnt, the fields laid waste, and men, women, and children, either pitilessly butchered, or dragged into hopeless captivity or servile slavery. For although Abyssinian law forbids any to make slaves of a Christian community, it had no such feeling or restriction for Mahomedans. The havoc and carnage were appalling in the extreme; yet the great King, elated with his inglorious achievements, and accompanied by weeping and disconsolate multitudes of enslaved and helpless creatures, turned his back upon the blood-stained battle-field.

Weakened, but not exhausted; prostrated, but not destroyed; defeated, but not vanquished, the Gallas, after this convulsive shock, rose again out of the depths of their humiliation, and, headed by Achmeder Busheer, a chieftain famous for his valour, by stratagem and reckless daring, sought to retrieve the almost overwhelming misfortune of his people. The struggle lasted several years, and the contest would have continued, had not a double-bladed lance dispatched the leader, and compelled him to tend the wound which, to the universal grief of a grateful people, at last proved fatal to his life.

Waizero Worket, Queen of the Gallas (in the name of her son, Imam Ashmadee, a lad of about twelve years of age, who was the hereditary prince) now assumed the reins of government, and, to retain the fealty of the chiefs, prosecuted the popular war.

Unwilling, and perhaps unable, to contend against a foe whom he could not annihilate or subdue, the artful Theodorus, in conformity with his usual practice, had recourse to hollow flattery, and with visionary promises of wealth, renown, and glory, endeavoured to entice the young Prince into his plausible net. Restless, bold, and aspiring, the youthful Imam, who was dazzled by the fair speeches of the royal emissaries, and still more by the chivalrous exploits of the dreaded Sovereign who wooed his friendship and alliance, yielded to the reiterated solicitations, and in an evil hour joined, together with several of his great nobles, the standard of the faithless Amhara. The unhappy Regent-mother, and her panic-stricken subjects, to forestal a more grievous calamity, in their embarrassing position, submitted to the onerous coalition imposed by the villanous conqueror. Concessions extorted by low trickery, and enforced by bitter threats, could not perpetuate peace, or ward off hos-

ilities. The King's demands, as in the case of the European captives, grew in proportion to the entreaties of the Regent; and when it became impossible and ruinous to comply, the Prince and his veteran companions were bound in fetters, and thrown into prison.

The revolt in Shoa, and the defections in and out of the camp, ought to have taught the despot a salutary lesson; but no, propelled by the fury of his passion, he spurned opposition, and madly pursued a policy that has shaken the whole realm to its very foundation. Impatient to chastise the disaffected provinces of the South, he hurried on to Magdala (the prison we have so long inhabited in misery and chains), where he deposited his host of native chiefs (and ourselves, nine in number), and then, with his usual alacrity, precipitated himself upon the seditious Gallas.

His plan was feasible, and had he succeeded in subjugating those restless mountaineers, it would have disheartened the Shoas, and driven them to sue for an ignoble peace. The enemy suspected his design, and without hazarding a battle, withdrew himself to the distant and inaccessible mountains.

Foiled in his expectations, he thoughtlessly pushed across the plains he had more than once before traversed as victor, and in his mind, no doubt, already ruminated on the castigation he would inflict on his rebellious Shoa subjects. Once in the midst of the hostile land, the enemy plucked up courage, and descending from their lofty hiding-place, began a destructive guerilla war. Numerous bands, like birds of prey, hovered around the camp when it rested, or assailed its rear when it moved. The entire route along which the army marched was stained with blood, and tainted the air with the putrescent miasma of the mangled and mutilated corpses.

Worried, exhausted, and dispirited, the dastardly hordes, who in their exploits had been wont to triumph more by the exhibition of numbers than by genuine martial valour, did not much relish the hardships, privations, and perils of the campaign; and the multitudinous hordes of King Theodore, instead of exposing themselves to the trenchant blades of the Mahommedan Gallas, and the no less true weapon of his rebellious brother-Christian, deserted the royal standard, and went over to the enemy's lines. The expedition proved a disastrous failure, and the tyrant, chafed like a furious lion robbed of his prey, retreated to Magdala, where on shackled prisoners he vented his rankling rage. Thirty-six of the principal captives, besides the Galla prince and his companions, received, in addition to the fetters round their ankles, another (and that attached to a short chain) round the wrist, and the two being linked together, the poor men could only shuffle along on the ground, or crouch down in a doubled-up and stooping posture. The bragging descendant of Solomon, who delights to revel in the misery of his victims, on being informed that his commands had been executed,

jocosely observed, "They will now be more meek when they hear of my mishap!"

Disappointed in his hopes of conquering Shoa, he directed his efforts to win back the justly-forfeited amity of the Gallas. To obtain this object, he resorted to mean and low intimidation and insincere promises to work upon the affections of the Queen-Regent, the mother of Imam. The suffering Prince and his followers, sighing for liberty and the free air of their native plains, implored their relations and friends to acquiesce in the King's demands.

Unhappy men!—wrapped in the glowing visions of coming joy, they became woefully oblivious of the bondage that had saddened their past. Fair words and plausible arguments, supported by a mother's scolding tears, allayed the angry feelings of the contending parties, when an event took place which for ever blighted the prospects of a reconciliation.

Menilek, the son of Hailu Malakot (the successor of Sahela Sellassie), the late King of Shoa, and heir-apparent to the throne of that province, on the defeat of his father resigned himself into the hands of King Theodore, the conqueror. Quick, gentle, and unpretending, he propitiated the tyrant's favour, and was honoured with the hand of a royal princess, a daughter of the descendant of Solomon. The troubles in his native land, however, revived in his bosom the dormant desire to ascend the throne of his ancestors, and to restore that country to the pristine glory of his grandfather.

Possessed with this natural but ambitious feeling, he did not deliberate long on the course he ought to pursue. His friends, to whom he communicated the design, approved his intention, and during a dark and auspicious night he and his followers quitted the camp of his father-in-law, guided by the glimmer of an occasional star. They noiselessly threaded their way across the deep chasm which lies in the bosom of the valley between the Amba Magdala and the Galla country, and, pursuing their path to the south-east, by the dawn of day they arrived upon the plains of the Wollo-Gallas, too far off to fear pursuit.

The camp was generally astir at an early hour in the morning, and officers, soldiers, servants, and slaves, excited and bewildered at this extraordinary occurrence, were rushing about in all directions, instituting inquiries and soliciting information about the fugitives. The Princess, forsaken, and, if the report is true, maltreated by the spouse her rank had exalted, sat convulsed with shame and indignation in her disgraced tent, panting for the moment that would give satisfaction to her revenge, and quell the tempest of her soul in its torment at the ingrate.

At sunrise the gates of Magdala were unbarred, and Ras Engeda, the Governor of the Fort, followed by about a score of the gloomy chiefs, swept through the narrow entrance to announce to his Majesty the untoward event. The tyrant, although conscious that this desertion involved the irretrievable loss of a kingdom, dexterously concealed the

wound that bled beneath the white shama (loose, outward garment) in which he was enveloped. Being informed of the direction the runaways had taken, he calmly ordered his telescope, and gazed towards the spot where Menilek was exchanging courtesies and felicitations with his mortal foes. Immoveable and statue-like, he sat for some minutes absorbed in the terrible contemplation that tore his heart; and then turning to his expectant chiefs, he observed, with that cold brow in which he is a perfect adept, "Worket has found a son who is free; she can therefore dispense with the one who is chained."

These words, notwithstanding the bland accents in which they were uttered, needed no comment to those around him, who so well understood his character; and, almost instantaneously, everyone grasped the hilt of his sword, and stood ready to fulfil the executioner's task.

Imam and the other Gallas, twenty-five in number, were instantly dragged out of the prison compound, and, in the presence of the King and his nobles, hacked and chopped into pieces. Not satisfied, however, with the massacre of the Mahomedans, he intended also, it was said, to immolate the Christian prisoners; and, probably, he would have carried his design into effect, had he not dreaded the consternation, disgust, and horror such a deed might inspire.

The Gallas, tired of the vacillating policy of the Regent, immediately on the death of her son, threw off their allegiance, and appointed Mashead, another wife of their late ruler, Queen, during her son's minority. A war, à l'outrance, was now declared against the contaminated Amharas, and the remotest hint at peace was construed into a serious treasonable offence.

Matters about this time became imminently critical. The tyrant, it is true, had still an army of about thirty thousand men, and the central provinces were loyal; and had he not despised the signs which had forewarned him of coming events, and had he adopted a more mild and lenient rule, he might have checked the progress of the insurrection and consolidated his power. But, instead of prudence and moderation, he plunged headlong into fresh excesses, and alienated from him his best and most trusty friends.

The Metropolitan, who had ever espoused the cause of the people, was imprisoned in his amba (mountain) home, and Wagshum (Governor) Defareeh, Ras Oubie, and other great officers, were put in chains, because the despot distrusted their fealty,* or was jealous of his influence among the soldiers.

Repeated attempts to penetrate into the Galla country, in order to relieve the garrison on Koubreet Amba (a fortress at the entrance of Shoa) having proved abortive, the worthy King, to the delight of all on

* This appears to have been Theodore's policy throughout his reign, from the moment he obtained sufficient power to execute his villainous designs.

and around Amba Magdala, struck his tents, and removed his camp to the high table-land of Wadala, to the north-east of the River Beshilo.

On these cool and verdant plains, surrounded by the semi-Galla tribes, who at his bidding would leave the plough and hoe, and seize the lance and buckler, he might, by the exercise of a little adroitness and skill, have reinforced his army, and marched, unopposed by cowardly rebels, on Lasta and Tigré. But the decree, "Thou art weighed in the balances" had gone forth against him, and no human power could stop his downward career. "God in anger," he used to say, "has appointed me King of Abyssinia, and until my mission is discharged I shall continue invulnerable."

The Wadaleons did all in their power to satisfy their expensive guest. Bread, mead, and butter flowed profusely into the camp; and when these did not suffice, cows and sheep were led to the slaughter by his generous entertainers. The demand kept pace with the supply; but the poor people, finding at length that misery and starvation were staring them in the face, rose en masse, and defied the merciless depredator. Driven on by a burning sensation of resentment, and an uncontrollable itching for plunder, he fell upon the peaceably disposed peasantry, and committed the most monstrous barbarities. "To arms!" was now the watchword of the people; and with the rapidity of lightning the cry spread over the lofty hills and plains of Wadala, was caught up by the deep valleys of Tschetshaho, till every village and hamlet within a radius of about thirty miles re-echoed to the tumultuous shout.

The film fell from the despot's eyes, and he now began to see the precarious tenure of his power, which was strikingly convincing to his astonished gaze. A more humane proceeding might still, notwithstanding numerous obstacles, have postponed the impending crisis. But this idea shook his whole frame. "By the sword I obtained a throne, and by the sword I will maintain it, or perish in the attempt." Such sentiments were not calculated to impose a restraint on a temper that knew no persuasion but the lash of the hippopotamus-whip, and no concession but the mutilating knife. Wadala experienced in all its rigours this frantic maxim; the desolation was complete, and the revenge most signal. The fire of insurrection, though extinguished in one spot, had already wafted its sparks, and kindled the conflagration, not so easily subdued, in many others. For miles and miles the dreadful tidings had circulated, and wherever there still existed a lingering feeling of loyalty, it was shaken off or transferred to the Wagshum Góbazie, the rebel ruler of Tigré and Lasta.*

* This man is the blood-enemy of King Theodore, and thinks he has a better and more legitimate right to the crown of Abyssinia. It was he who offered Colonel Merewether to bring down the captives to Massowah, if England would recognize his title, and assist him to obtain the throne. The Government refused this offer, on the ground of its not being honourable to treat with him while the period for the ultimatum to Theodore was not expired.

For a few weeks the grain and cattle collected by the rapacious hordes of the King sufficed to glut their rapacious stomachs, and then it became imperative upon them to seek out fresh places for pillage. Begemeder, owing to its well-stored granaries and numerous flocks, offered an abundant harvest for the support of the pillage-loving army; but as many of the chiefs and soldiers among the royal troops belonged to that province, it was deemed inexpedient to provoke aggression there. The casting of cannon at Gaffat, the settling accounts with governors, and the execution of re-captured deserters, afforded a good pretext for a protracted stay from home. A low, but distinct murmur of dissatisfaction among the oppressed peasantry, which found a response in the hearts of their friends and relatives in the ranks, induced the unsparing desolator to shift his camp.

Unhappy Dembea, which by this time had recovered from the shock of former years, to avoid a similar catastrophe now, hospitably entertained the greedy legions on their journey round the lake. The tyrant himself, in his progress, was agitated by unwonted compunctions in beholding the desolation he had created in that once lovely and prolific region. Lifting his right hand to heaven, he swore that "if God gave him back his country, he would make those weed-entangled tracts a terrestrial paradise." It was one of his retinue who overheard the remark, and he whispered to his companions, "If he creates a paradise, the serpent will certainly not be wanting." These penitential emotions were, however, only a spasmodic qualm, which quickly passed away, without enlightening the soul's midnight gloom.

It was about this time that Mr. Rassam arrived at Matemma, on the errand of mercy from the Queen of England. Flattered by an envoy from one of the greatest sovereigns of the universe, the crafty Theodore accorded Mr. Rassam a most gracious and brilliant reception. Every wish was to be gratified, and every request embodied in her Majesty's letter was to be granted. The captives were ordered to be released, and the members of the Mission were to be treated with royal deference; not even the most trivial favour that could minister to their gratification was to be denied to the honoured guests. This amazing condescension augured well for the solution of the Abyssinian difficulty, and the termination of the cruel and wretched bondage of the captives.

Damot, on the borders of Godjam, whether in token of gratitude for the advent of the distinguished visitors, or for some other equally worthy pretext, is still unknown, was plundered, and more than 80,000 head of cattle driven away to furnish the broundo (raw meat) for the royal table, and to replenish, by advantageous speculations, the drained dollar-bags in the Negus' exchequer.

Mr. Rassam, delighted with the success of his difficult mission, and captivated by the King's generous and amiable deportment, sojourned a few days in the camp, and then, escorted by royal baldarabas (intro-

ducers, commissioners), steered across the Lake Tsana to the opposite shore, (where provision was made for the reception of himself and suite, consisting of Lieutenant Prideaux and Dr. Blanc) to a town called Quarata, or Korata; and the army moved on to Zagye.

At Korata, the captives, after their journey from Magdala, joined the suite of Mr. Rassam. Compliments the most exaggerated were now more than ever liberally exchanged between the King and the envoy of her Majesty. There also took place a reconciliation between the offended Negus and his white captives, and all went on as cheerily as a marriage-bell.

The long days, not long in hours, but on account of the uncertainty still hanging over the future, rolled on most sluggishly.

Solomon's seal, and other trinkets, which were to be awarded to the members of the Mission, appeared never to progress, and it was vainly conjectured that the workmanship was so elaborate that they would not obtain the finishing touch until the Greek kalends. Hours glided into days, days into weeks, and at last the welcome intelligence reached the Mission camp that the saddles and swords had arrived from Debra Tabor, but that the unfortunate seals in the workshop of Zandel, one of the King's European employés, were still in embryo condition. The inspired writer of the matchless Book of Proverbs was forgotten, and the wise King of Israel rose before the mind of vision like a terrible, unsightly spectre. Whether Zandel's fingers were palsied, or whether a mysterious warning checked the progress of the seals, is still a secret; nor did anyone harass his brain with such a forbidden topic, particularly as the decorations were not to protract the stay on Habesh ground.

The departure of the captives, their short journey, and treacherous arrest, need not be reiterated here.

The despicable tyrant was true to his nature, and it is only to be deplored that an over-weening confidence should have forestalled what might, perhaps, have been practicable—a timely flight.

The camp, which is never a very agreeable home, after the keen disappointment all had experienced, became a perfectly loathsome abode. Those fond of sensation scenes could here have cloyed their strange taste. There at one time might be seen the cracking giraffe (hippopotamus-whip, six feet long) as it descended on the bare back, cutting deep furrows with every stroke.* Next, the knotty stick rattled noisily above

* * Dr. Blanc gives the following account of this horrible weapon of torture:—
“When we arrived he (the King) imposed upon us by his sweet tongue; we saw the wild beast only at rest in his drowsy state; we thought him good, the rebels bad, and that virtue and goodness would at last prevail over rebellion and mutiny. But the mask soon fell; even at Zagye (the camp) we saw the six-feet-long hippopotamus-whip tearing to pieces the delicate skin of an Abyssinian lady, but this was nothing. Gondar (the capital) disappeared in flames, kindled by the “father of his people,” so that the rebels on the surrounding height might see, far and distant, the glare of the doomed city; priests, women, and not a few wretches supposed to be rebels, were added as fuel, so that the fire should not go out for want of materials. Chiefs after chiefs were chained, tormented, and crowded together in small huts; day after day new murders,

the bluster of heaving bands ; and then again there were executions of every device and cunning, from the severing of the head to the amputating of hands and feet, and from the battering with stones to the braining of an appellant for justice, with a block of wood, by the delicate hands of a King. But it is sickening to linger on the diversions of the Negus, with which every one in the position of a captive becomes, alas ! too familiar, and I gladly, therefore, resume the thread of my narrative, from which a cruel episode caused us, *en passant*, to digress.

Encamped on the confines of a country that had first raised the standard of rebellion and challenged the despot's power, it was naturally anticipated that an order to march against the insurgents would every moment resound through the long lines of black tents by which the King was surrounded. The enemy, undaunted by the herald's vaunting proclamation, that ere long a rich booty would fall to each soldier's share, hovered in small divisions around the outlets of Zagye (where they were encamped), killing stragglers, and enticing deserters. Ashamed and irritated, the blustering despot indulged in all sorts of innoxious brag. "Godjam," he prates—and that, too, in the presence of his foreign guests—"Godjam I shall destroy, and its inhabitants I shall kill." Such were the outpourings of his heart ; but happily the promptings of his dastardly spirit were not accomplished. His feelings were most merciless ; and had his arm been equal to the task, the lion, the leopard, and the elephant might now occupy the homes where busy multitudes of human beings pursued their peaceful and varied occupations, and industrious toil, in quiet security. Godjam was therefore spared, but Zagye had to suffer.

This hadam (asylum), embosomed in one of the woody slopes that skirt Maitsha plain, where the blue Nile, after a graceful sweep through the Lake Dembea, or Tsana, sends its muddy, but prolific waters over the dizzying cataracts, and across the fat pastures and dreary sands, down through the regions of immortal fame, owing to its superstitiously-sacred character, enjoyed a kind of immunity from the forays and exactions which so often blight the prospects of the merchant, and the labours of the husbandman, in this misgoverned and distressed country.

But King Theodorus acknowledged no such privileges, nor admitted any rules which did not coincide with his despotic will. The Church might, indeed, be sacred, but it must be stripped of its wealth, the homes of the peasantry might present charming retreats for the people,

new tortures, until one morning he enjoyed the sight (and, it is said by another captive, actually assisted) of 670 of his own soldiers butchered on a mere suspicion of their intention of desiring to run away." Another account states that after the desertion of 3,000 of his soldiers, their wives and children, who were left in the camp, were clothed in cotton dresses dipped in wax, and actually set on fire, and burnt to death. It is also stated that when he set fire to Gondar, and burnt down the forty-four churches there, that scores of women were driven into houses, which were set on fire, and all burnt together. These atrocities are only exceeded by the account given by Mr. Rassam, in his letter to the *Times*, in which it is said the King butchered 2,500 of his soldiers, who were suspected of intended desertion.

and sylvan beauty for the peaceful and industrious inhabitants ; but they must be rifled and burnt for the benefit or caprice of the pillage-loving hordes who accompanied their royal master in his rapacious and murderous expeditions.

His was not a mission to teach his subjects to live in the midst of charming bowers ; no, they must learn to despise the coffee and lemon-tree, the jasmine and myrtle, and to be content with stinging weeds and pestilential wilds. He was, as he is in all that involves ruin and misery, true to his character,—a despot and a despoiler. And Zagye will long remember the visit of King Theodore to its locality.

Whilst the despot, like a destroying angel, was scattering death and desolation along his path, another and no less dangerous and unsparing foe made its appearance.

For some days there had been rumours that the cholera was in the camp, but superstitious fear foolishly sought to suppress the ugly fact. A sudden death in the royal household, and the unmistakable symptoms that others would speedily follow, awed the tyrant, and induced him to hurry on to Quarata (where the captives had taken up their residence). The insidious enemy obstinately followed the weary hordes, marking the whole way with the corpses of its victims. Agha Faree Gholam (the executioner), a great friend of the King (whose heavy hand had inflicted more than one wound on the face of the writer on a former occasion, whilst squatted in an easy attitude near him), was suddenly struck by the invisible shaft, and for ever deprived of the abused power of the hangman. The cemeteries round the nunnery and churches in and near Quarata (or Korata) were already choked with the dead. Still the terrible scourge did not abate its virulence. Everywhere—in the streets, in the tents, on the fields,—in fact, in all the surrounding places, there was heard the plaintive wails of the mourners, and the thrilling shrieks of the bereaved and the dying. Few were exempted ; hoary age and innocent childhood, the burly warrior and the tender maiden, all were—unmourned ; and, I fear, too frequently unforgiven—consigned to the silent but grasping tomb. The tyrant, thinking that the clods might soon rattle upon his own coffin, now read the Psalms (the constant companion of his campaigns or his camp), prayed, and appeared penitent ; but if not in reality so, he was at least more humane. No longer, then, fell on the startled ear the crack of the “giraffe,” or the vociferous shouts for the agha farees (hangmen). The executioner’s post was in reality now what no rational being here could ever have dreamt of—an absolute sinecure in King Theodore’s camp—whilst the office of the priest became a most arduous and self-denying task. “On to Debra Tabor (the present residence of royalty, and the only spot King Theodore can now call his own), where the air is salubrious and the hills breathe the vigour of health !” shouted the royal herald. And instantly the tents were struck, the horses and mules were saddled, and

every one able to move hastened forward to ward off the dreaded disease; but the rider on the "pale horse" was as indefatigable on the march as he was during the halt of the multitudes, who had cherished the vain hope that they were secure from his icy grasp; and hundreds expired under the shade of the trees, on the banks of meandering streams, and on broad fallow fields. The very spots where relatives watched around the convulsed frame of a husband, a wife, brother, or sister, were impregnated with offensive and putrid exhalations. Those who had no friends, or heart of sympathy to alleviate and lighten their pangs, or to administer to their malady, tottered painfully along till their eyes became dim, their limbs stiff, and they sunk down to rise no more. No sepulchral rites were awarded to their mortal remains, no funeral hymns were sung around their sleeping dust; a few handfuls of earth were thrown over their corpses, and then the indifferent multitude rushed from the exposed village cemetery, or the isolated dell, careless and unconcerned whether before another sun rose the vultures of the air or the hyænas of the forest had gorged their voracious appetites upon the lately breathing and thinking forms of their accompanying relatives and friends. Thus perished hundreds and thousands of the hosts of that army whose King had led and encouraged them to deeds of violence and rapine—shall we say, as a just retribution for their offences?

At Debra Tabor the pestilence received a check, although numbers still succumbed to its pernicious influence.

The epidemic had been most virulent in the army, and how to reinforce its broken and scattered ranks began to be a grave and momentous question. Quara, to the west (the province where Theodore was born), and Tschelga, to the north-west, had hitherto been privileged provinces; the former on account of its being the natal home of the despot, and the latter because it contained until then the State prison; they had now, however, to furnish large contingents. The raw recruits, fond of their sunny vales, where benignant nature, with the least toil, amply provides every want, did not, therefore, relish the bustle and excitement, and still less the privations, of a camp. And so, without troubling their dull intellects about the King, the condition of his country, and the ephemeral honours and rewards that it was promised them should fall to their lot, they girded their unwieldy swords upon their belts, and during a bright moonlight night bade adieu to the chilly upland plains, where they had been called to join the army, and returned to their picturesque and fertile homes.

The tyrant, instead of wreaking his disappointment on his foes, ruthlessly resented this affront upon his friends. Rebels, with their factious bands, defied him on all sides; and he had only to buckle on his faithful sword, and all their contemptible show would have terminated in a precipitous flight. For it is well known that his prestige was such,

and the superstitious feelings of the people had so completely cowed them either into servile obedience or dastardly cowardice, that the very sound of his voice made the whole army tremble.

Besotted by an insane belief that his throne was secure, he wasted his days in fanciful speculations on his future contests, slaughters, and victories. "Let the insurgents get fat during the rainy season; we shall kill them afterwards," was his favourite expression. Impoverished and grievously taxed, Begemeder had during the whole of this time to bear the burden of providing for the King and his army. Military chiefs, governors, and even common soldiers, despairingly shook their greasy, bushy heads. The insurrection in the disaffected provinces assumed a wider range. The dangers far and near grew more and more pressing; and the prelude of impending ruin resounded from voices hitherto duly vocal to the tyrant's praise. Roused to action by these ominous signs, he bade farewell to debasing indulgences, and set out for the South.

It was now thought that the campaign had begun in earnest, and that a struggle, in which the fate of the realm was involved, would ensue in reality, when lo! and behold, the straggling forces were ordered back to Debra Tabor, and the farce terminated by sending eight white defenceless captives to Magdala! Enemies were secure, and friends in peril. Gondar, which more than once had felt the sanguinary violence of the despot, was again to smart beneath his pitiless ferocity. A rebel, whom the few impoverished and half-starved inhabitants were forced to accommodate in their huts, formed the pretext of this outburst. A sharp march of two days brought the spoliator to that ruined and ill-used capital. The people, terrified and panic-struck, in their confusion raised the wonted "li-la-la-li" of welcome. This the cruel tyrant monster construed into a warning note to the insurgents, and instantly every man, woman, and child found in the streets was seized and consumed beneath the burning rafters of the nearest houses. The private dwellings, which had been robbed on several previous occasions, offered no booty to the invaders; but the forty-four churches, which both Christian and Mahomedan marauders had left hitherto untouched, presented attractions not to be despised by the pious, psalm-reading, and pillage-loving King Theodorus. The command was given, and simultaneously the profane scoundrels rushed into the sacred edifices (which had hitherto been deemed places of refuge, both for the people and their property), and unheeding of the supplications and tears of the people, or the deprecations of the clergy, maltreated the monks and priests, carried off vestments, mitres, crosses, pictures, and chalices—in fact, everything which, on account of its antiquity or value, had for ages been regarded with the utmost awe and veneration by the devout and superstitious hierarchy. Many of the sacred edifices were wantonly set on fire and burnt to the ground, and those that escaped that element were sacrilegiously despoiled by the miscreant soldiery. The news of this

infamous spoliation spread rapidly through the length and breadth of the land. "Death to the odious infidels!" shouted every voice but those of the myrmidons of the tyrant. But although the stir, clamour, and tumult was intense, it all ended in empty demonstration and noise. The tyrant, after this inglorious achievement, returned with his shameless trophies to Debra Tabor, where the gibes and sneers of foes, and the contempt and disgust of friends, stung him to the quick, and raised a tempest in his heart that could only find relief in the wail of misery or the moans of distress. His military chiefs, the abettors of his crimes, in the absence of other victims, were selected to feel the pangs and agonies they had often enough mercilessly inflicted on the helpless and unoffending.

A charge of conspiracy and sedition was trumped up against them, and without trial or inquiry they were stripped, chained, and thrust into prison. An exorbitant fine was immediately imposed upon them, and when this was not forthcoming, they were subjected to the most excruciating tortures.

The perfidy of the savage tyrant against his chiefs was an unmistakable warning to their people; confident in the strength of their spears, and in the inviolable loyalty they had in every emergency exhibited, the intimidation of their King was recklessly unheeded, and their usual avocations were pursued with unslackened industry. The panting and plundering Theodorus did not admire this tranquillity, as it deprived him of the plea of attacking the peaceably disposed peasantry. Want, however, distress, and famine, broke down the weak barriers, and, to the surprise of every one, the villages and hamlets in the neighbourhood of Debra Tabor were pillaged and razed, or burnt. The patient and docile people who had submitted to starvation to feed the robber and his bands, now shook off their dull sloth, and, roused by their necessitous condition, snatched up their weapons, which they had hitherto concealed, and rose up manfully to assert their rights and defend their lives and homes. The beacon of insurrection was lighted on the hills surrounding the King's camp, and met with a ready response from every promontory, nook, and corner of the weary and exhausted province. Frantic with demoniacal rage at this unexpected resistance of his power and authority, the infatuated barbarian sprang upon the weakest of the seven districts into which the province was divided, and perpetrated enormities not to be thought of without a shudder; the weak and the strong, the aged and the young, all fell beneath the murderous knife, or perished in the flames of their burning huts. Prayers and supplications, groans and shrieks, fell unheeded alike on deaf ears; and the curved blade, did not return to its scabbard until, from the Tzana or Dembea Lake up to the capital of Begemeder (Debra Tabor), all that could shelter man or beast was reduced to ashes.

The retributive vengeance and the bristling array of lances that stood

prepared to dispute the progress of the tyrant to the South had cowed the spirit of the King, and induced him again to return to his entrenched camp, with his gangs of banditti, and thousands of famished peasants, who to escape a dreadful death had joined the rabble host, preferring the security of a strong, and for Abyssinian assailants, an impregnable fence. Now and then, it is true, he sallies forth upon a marauding expedition to retired villages, where his devastating arm has not yet been felt, carrying death and destruction to the peaceful and unprotected peasants, and returning with spoils and triumph to his camp. But he dares not wander far from his stronghold, lest he should meet with a foe who might chastise him, or cut him off from his fenced city.

The political condition of the country is at present a complete anomaly—a king without a country, subjects, or army, and rebels with countless legions and the support of the nation, stand opposed to each other in hostile array, none of whom have courage enough to attack the tyrant in his den, even if they dare to meet him in the field. Thus anarchy and confusion reign everywhere, and ruin and desolation threaten the whole realm with destruction, and famine. Had patriotism and regard for order and law not been superseded by the lust of power and the gratification of stupid pride, Theodore's ferocious violence would never have dared to riot in the throes of the people. Just now the clamour for the destruction of the common enemy is no longer confined to the lines of the insurgent chiefs. It is the utterance of the Church, and may be heard in the peasant's hut. Whether the Wagshum Góbazyé,* the most puissant of the rebel leaders, after the rainy season, will lead his forces into Begemeder, and assail the rampant lion in his den, a few weeks more must decide. He has pledged his word to the impatient peasantry, and if he disappoints their eager expectations, he will forfeit their allegiance, and mar his own ambitious prospects. Whether the events looming in the distance will bring peace or more trouble, security or greater confusion; whether they will un rivet the manacles of the captives, or fasten them tighter round their limbs, are contingencies under the control of Him who, when foes surround and fears agitate, can succour, shield, and deliver.

HENRY A. STERN.

* If the Negus falls into his hands, he will have a woeful death, as numbers of the Wagshum's relatives have been the victims of the ruthless tyrant's cruelty. About eight years ago the Negus cruelly mutilated the Wagshum's father, and then publicly hung his remains on a tree.

LOSING LENA.

I SAID I'd tell you some more about Tod.

One day in the summer holidays, just after the crop of hay was got in, and the bare fields looked as white in the blazing sun as if they had been scorched, Tod and I were in the three-cornered meadow next the fold-yard. He was making a bat-net with gauze and two sticks. Young Jacobson had shown us his the previous day, and a bat he caught with it; and Tod thought he would catch bats too. But he did not seem to be making much hand at the nets, and somehow managed to send the pointed end of the stick through a corner of it.

"I don't think that gauze is strong enough, Tod."

"I'm afraid it isn't, Johnny. Here, catch hold of it. I'll go in-doors, and see if they can't find me some better."

He flew off past the ricks, and leaped the little gate into the fold-yard—a tall, strong fellow, fit to leap the Avon. There ensued some talking in a few minutes, and I went to meet him. Tod was coming away from the house with Lena.

"Have you got the gauze, Tod?"

"Not a bit of it; that old cat won't look for any; says she hasn't time," was Tod's answer. "I'll hinder her time a little. Come along, Lena."

Tod alluded to Hannah. I told you before that they were often at daggers drawn. Hannah had a chronic complaint, ill-temper, and Tod called her names to her face. When he went in just now, he found her dressing Hugh and Lena to go out, and she just turned him out of the nursery, and told him not to bother her then with his gauze and his wants. Lena ran after Tod; she liked him better than all of us put together. She had got on her blue silk, and a white straw hat with daisies round it, and open-work stockings on her pretty little legs; by which we saw she was about to be taken out for show.

"What are you going to do with her, Tod?"

"I'm going to hide her," answered Tod, in his decisive voice. "Keep where you are, Johnny."

Lena enjoyed the rebellion. In a minute or two Tod came back alone. He had left her between the ricks in the three-cornered field, and told her not to come out. Then he went off to the front of the house, and I stood inside the barn talking to Mack, who was hammering away at the iron of the cart-wheel. Out came Hannah by-and-by. She had been dressing herself as well as Hugh.

"Miss Lena!"

No answer. Hannah called again, and then came up the fold-yard, looking about.

"Master Johnny, have you seen the child?"

"What child?" I was not going to spoil Tod's sport by telling her.

"Miss Lena. She has got off somewhere, and my mistress is waiting for her in the basket-chaise."

"I see her just now along of Master Joseph," spoke up Mack, arresting his noisy hammering.

"See her where?" asked Hannah.

"Close here, a-going that way."

He pointed with the hammer to the palings and gate that divided the yard from the three-cornered field. Hannah ran there and stood looking over. The ricks were within a short stone's-throw, but Lena kept close. Hannah called out again, and ranged her eyes over the empty field.

"The child's not there. Where can she have got to, tiresome little thing?"

In the house, and about the house, and out of the house, as the old song says, went Hannah. It was jolly to see her, and laugh on the quiet, as Tod did. Mrs. Todhetley, Hugh with her, was seated patiently in the basket-chaise before the hall-door, wondering what made Hannah so long. Tod, playing with the mild she-donkey's ears, stood talking, unusually gracious, to his step-mother. I went round. The Pater had gone riding to Evesham; Dwarf Giles, who made the nattiest little groom in the county, for all his five-and-thirty years, behind him.

"I can't find Miss Lena," cried Hannah, coming out.

"Not find Miss Lena!" echoed Mrs. Todhetley. "What do you mean, Hannah? Have you not dressed her?"

"I dressed her first, ma'am, before Master Hugh, and she went out of the nursery. I can't think where she can have got to. I've searched everywhere."

"But, Hannah, we must have her directly; I am late as it is."

They were going over to the court where the Stirlings lived, to a children's early party. Mrs. Todhetley got out of the basket-chaise, to help in the search.

"I had better fetch her, Tod," I whispered.

He nodded yes. Tod never bore malice, and I suppose he thought Hannah had had enough of a hunt for that day. I ran through the fold-yard to the ricks, and called to Lena.

"You can come out now, little stupid."

But no Lena answered. There were seven ricks in a group, and I went into all the openings between them. Lena was not there. It was rather odd, and I looked across the field and towards the lane and the coppice, shouting out sturdily.

"Mack, have you seen Miss Lena pass in-doors?" I stayed to ask him, in going back.

No: Mack had not noticed her; and I went round to the front again, and whispered to Tod.

"What a muff you are, Johnny! She's between the ricks fast enough. No danger that she'd come out when I told her to stay."

"But she's not there indeed, Tod. You go and look else."

Tod vaulted off, his long legs seeming to take flying leaps, like a deer's, on his way to the ricks.

To make short of the story, Lena was gone. Lost! The house, the out-door buildings, the gardens were searched for her, and she was not to be found. Mrs. Todhetley's fears flew to the ponds at first; but it was impossible she could have come to grief in either of the two, as they were both in view of the barn-door where I and Mack had been. Tod avowed where he had put her to hide; and it was not to be imagined where she had gone. The most feasible conjecture was, that she had run from between the ricks when Hannah called to her, and was hiding in the lane.

Tod was in a fever, and loudly threatened her with unheard-of whippings, to cover his real concern. Hannah looked red, Mrs. Todhetley rather whiter than usual. I was standing by him when the cook came up; a sharp woman, with red-brown eyes. We called her Molly.

"Mr. Joseph," said she, "I've heard of gipsies stealing children!"

"Well?" returned Tod.

"There was one at the door a while ago—an insolent one, too. Perhaps Miss Lena——"

"Which way did she go?—which door was she at?" burst forth Tod.

"'Twas a man, sir. He come up to the kitchen-door, and steps inside as bold as brass, asking me to buy some wooden skewers he'd cut, and saying something about a sick child. When I told him to march, that we never tolerated tramps here, he wanted to answer me, and I just shut the door in his face. A regular gipsy, if ever I see one," continued Molly; "his skin tawny and his wild hair jet-black. Maybe, in revenge, he have stole off the little miss."

Tod took up the notion, and his face turned white. "Don't say anything of this to Mrs. Todhetley," he said to Molly. "We must just scour the country."

But in departing from the kitchen-door, the gipsy man could not by any possibility have got to the rick-field without going through the house and the fold-yard. It was true that Lena might have run round and got in the gipsy's way. Unfortunately, none of the men were about, except Mack and old Thomas. Tod sent these off in different directions; Mrs. Todhetley drove away in her pony-chaise to the lanes round about, saying the child might have strayed there; Molly and the

maids started elsewhere; and I and Tod went flying along a bye-road that branched off in a line, as it were, from the kitchen-door. Nobody could keep up with Tod, he went so fast; and I was not tall and strong as he was. But I saw what Tod in his haste did not see—a dark man, with a bundle of skewers and a stout stick, walking on the other side of the hedge. I whistled Tod back again.

"What is it, Johnny?" he said, panting. "Have you seen her?"

"Not her. But look there. That must be the man Molly spoke of."

Tod crashed through the hedge as if it had been so many cobwebs, and accosted the gipsy. I followed more carefully, but got my face scratched.

"Were you up at the great house begging a short while ago?" demanded Tod, in an awful passion.

The man turned round on Tod with a face of brass. I say brass, because he did it so independently; but it was not an insolent face in itself, rather a sad one, and very sickly.

"What's that you ask me, master?"

"I ask whether it was you who were at the manor-house just now, begging?" fiercely repeated Tod.

"I was at a big house offering wares for sale, if you mean that. I wasn't begging."

"Call it what you please," said Tod, growing white again. "What have you done with the little girl?"

For, you see, Tod had fully caught the impression that the gipsy spoken of by Molly *had* stolen Lena, and he spoke in accordance with it.

"I've seen no little girl, master."

"You have," and Tod gave his foot a stamp. "What have you done with her?"

The man's only answer was to turn round and walk off, muttering to himself. Tod pursued him, calling him a thief and other names; but nothing more satisfactory could he get.

"He can't have taken her, Tod. If he had, she'd be with him now. He couldn't eat her, you know."

"He may have given her to a confederate."

"What to do? What do gipsies steal children for?"

Tod stopped in a passion, lifting his hand. "If you torment me with these frivolous questions, Johnny, I'll strike you. How do I know what's done with stolen children? Sold again, perhaps. I'd give a hundred pounds out of my pocket at this minute if I knew where those gipsies were encamped."

We suddenly lost the fellow. Tod had been keeping him in sight in the distance. Whether he disappeared up a gum-tree, or into a rabbit-hole, Tod couldn't tell; but gone he was.

Up this lane, down that; over that moor, across this common; so

raced Tod and I. And the afternoon wore away, and we had changed our direction a dozen times : which possibly was not wise.

The sun was getting low as we passed Ragley gates, for we had finally got into the Alcester road. Tod was going to do what we ought to have done at first : report the loss at Alcester. Somebody came riding along on a stumpy pony. It proved to be Gruff Blossom, groom to the Jacobsons. They called him "Gruff" because of his temper. He did touch his hat to us, which was as much as you could say, and spurred the stumpy animal on. But Tod went up to him, and he was obliged to stop and listen.

"The gipsies stole off little Miss Lena!" cried old Blossom, coming out of his gruffness. "That's a rum go! Ten to one if you find her for a year to come."

"But, Blossom, what do they do with the children they steal?" I asked, in a sort of agony.

"They cuts their hair off and dyes their skins brown and then takes 'em out to fairs a ballad-singing," answered Blossom.

"But why need they do it, when they have children of their own?"

"Ah, well, that's a question I couldn't answer," said old Blossom.

"Maybe their'n arn't pretty childern—Miss Lena, she is."

"Have you heard of any gipsies being encamped about here?" Tod demanded of him.

"Not lately, Mr. Joseph. Five or six months ago, there was a lot 'camped on a piece o' ground o' the Markis's. They warn't there long."

"Can't you ride about, Blossom, and see after the child?" asked Tod, putting something into his hand.

Old Blossom pocketed it, and went off with a nod. He was riding about, as we knew afterwards, for hours. Tod made straight for the police-station at Alcester, and told his tale. Not a soul was there but Jenkins, one of the men.

"I haven't seen no suspicious characters about," said Jenkins, who seemed to be eating something. He was a big man, with short black hair combed on his forehead, and he had a habit of turning his face upwards, as if looking after his nose—a square ornament; that stood up straight.

"She is between four and five years old; a very pretty child, with blue eyes, and a good deal of curling auburn hair," said Tod, who was getting feverish.

Jenkins wrote it down—"Name, Todhetley. What Christian name?"

"Adalena, called 'Lena.'"

"Recollect the dress, sir?"

"Pale blue silk, straw hat with wreath of daisies round it; open-worked white stockings, and thin black shoes; white drawers, finished

off with tatting stuff," recounted Tod, as if he had prepared the list by heart coming along.

"That's bad, that dress is," said Jenkins, putting down the pen.

"Why is it bad?"

"'Cause the things is tempting. Quite half the children that get stole is stole for what they've got upon their backs. Tramps and that sort will run a risk for a blue silk, specially if it's clean and glistening, that they'd not run for a brown holland pinafore. Auburn curls, too," added Jenkins, shaking his head; "that's a temptation also. I've knowed children sent back home with bare heads afore now. Any ornaments, sir?"

"She was safe to have on her little gold neck-chain and cross. They are very small, Jenkins—not worth much."

Jenkins lifted his nose—not in disdain, it was a habit he had. "Not worth much to you, sir, who could buy such any day, but an uncommon bait to professional child-stealers. Were the cross a coral, or any stone of that sort?"

"It was a thin, small gold cross, and the chain was thin. They could only be seen when her cloak was taken off. Oh, I forgot the cloak; it was white: llama, I think they call it. She was going to a child's party."

Some more questions and answers, most of which Jenkins took down. Handbills were to be printed and posted, and a reward offered on the morrow, if she was not found previously. Then we came away; there was nothing more to do at the station.

"Wouldn't it have been better if Jenkins had gone out seeking her and telling of the loss abroad, instead of waiting to write all that down?" I asked.

"Johnny, if we don't find her to-night, I shall go mad," was all Tod answered.

He went back down Alcester Street at a rushing walk—not a run. "Where are you going now?" I said.

"I'm going up hill and down dale till I find that gipsies' encampment. You can go on home, Johnny, if you are tired."

I had not felt tired till we were in the police-station. Excitement keeps fatigue off. But I was not going to give in, and said I should keep with him.

"All right, Johnny."

Before we were clear of Alcester, Budd the agent came up. He was turning out of the public-house at the corner. It was dusk then. Tod laid hold of him.

"Budd, you are about always, in all kinds of by-nooks and lanes: can you tell me of any encampment of gipsies between here and the manor-house?"

The agent's business took him abroad a great deal, you know, into the rural districts around.

"Gipsies' encampment?" repeated Budd, giving both of us a stare. "There's none that I know of. In the spring, a lot of them had the impudence to squat down on the Marquis's ——"

"Oh, I know all that," interrupted Tod. "Is there nothing of the sort about now?"

"I see a miserable little tent to-day up Cookhill way," said Budd. "It might have been a gipsy's or a travelling tinker's. 'Twasn't of much account, whichever it were."

Tod gave a sort of spring. "Whereabouts?" was all he asked. And Budd explained where. Tod went off like a shot, and I after him.

If you are familiar with Alcester, or have visited at Ragley or anything of that, you must know the long green lane leading to Cookhill; it's dark with overhanging trees, and up-hill all the way. We took that road—Tod first, and I last; and we came to the top, and turned in the direction Budd had described the tent to be.

It was not to be called dark; the nights never are at midsummer; and rays from the bright light in the west glimmered through the trees. On the outskirts of the coppice, in a bit of low ground, we saw the tent, a little mite of a thing, looking no better than a funnel turned upside down. Sounds were heard within it, and Tod put his finger on his lip while he listened. But we were too far off, and he took his boots off, and crept up close.

Sounds of wailing—of somebody in pain. But that Tod had been three parts out of his senses all the afternoon, he might have known at once that they did not come from Lena, or any one so young. Words were mingled with them in a woman's voice; uncouth in its accents, nearly non-understandable in its language, an awful sadness in its tone.

"A bit longer! a bit longer, Corry, and he'd ha' been back. You needn't ha' grudged it to us. Oh, ——h! if ye had but waited a bit longer!"

I don't write exactly as she spoke; I shouldn't know how to spell it: we made a dash guess at half the words. Tod, who had grown white again, drew on his boots, and lifted up the opening of the tent.

I had never seen any scene like that; I don't suppose I shall see another. About a foot from the ground was a raised surface of some sort, thickly covered with dark-green rushes, just the size and shape of a gravestone. A little child, about as old as Lena, lay on it, a white cloth thrown across her, just touching the white, still face. A torch, blazing and smoking away, was thrust into the ground and lighted up the scene. Whiter the face looked now, because it had been tawny in life. I'd rather see one of our faces dead than a gipsy's. The contrast between the white face and dress of the child and the green bed of rushes it lay on was something remarkable. A young woman, dark too, and handsome enough to create a commotion at the fair, knelt down, her brown

hands uplifted ; a gaudy ring on one of the fingers, worth sixpence perhaps, new, sparkling in the torch-light. Tod strode up to the dead face and looked at it for full two minutes. I do believe he thought at first that it was Lena.

"What is this ?" he asked.

"It's my dead child !" the woman answered. "She did not wait that her father might see her die !"

But Tod had got his head full of Lena, and looked round. "Is there no other child here ?"

As if to answer him, a bundle of rags came out of a corner and set up a howl. It was a boy, and our going in had woke him up. The woman sat down on the ground and looked at us.

"We have lost a child—a little girl," explained Tod. "I thought she might have been brought here—or have strayed here."

"I've lost *my* girl," said the woman. "Death has come for her !" And, in speaking to us, she spoke a more intelligible language than when alone.

"Yes ; but this child has been lost—lost out of doors ! Have you seen or heard anything of one ?"

"I've not been in the way o' seeing or hearing, master ; I've been in the tent alone. If folks had come to my aid, Corry might not have died. I've had nothing but water to put in her lips all day !"

"What was the matter with her ?" Tod asked, convinced at length that Lena was not there.

"She have been ailing long—worse since the moon come in. The sickness took her with the summer, and the strength began to go out. Jake have been down, too. He couldn't get out to bring us help, and we'd none left."

Jake was the husband. The help meant food, or funds to get it with.

"He sat yesterday cutting skewers, his hands a'most too weak to fashion 'em. Maybe he'd sell 'em for a few ha'pence, he said ; and he went out this morning to try."

"Tod," I whispered, "I wish that hard-hearted Molly had——"

"Hold your tongue, Johnny," he interrupted. "Is Jake your husband ?" he asked of the woman.

"He's my husband, and the children's father."

"Jake wouldn't be likely to steal a child, would he ?" asked Tod, in a hesitating manner, for him.

She looked up, as if not understanding. "Steal a child, master ! What for ?"

"I don't know," said Tod. "I thought, perhaps, he had done it, and had brought the child here."

Another comical stare from the woman. "We couldn't feed these of ours ; what should we do with another ?"

"Well: Jake called at our house to sell his skewers; and, directly afterwards, we missed my little sister. I have been hunting for her ever since."

"Was the house far from here?"

"A few miles."

"Then he have sunk down of weakness, on his way back, and can't get here."

Putting her head on her knees, she began to sob and moan. The child—the living one—began to bawl; one couldn't call it anything else; and pulled at the green rushes.

"He knew Corry was sick and faint when he went out. He'd have got back afore now if his strength hadn't failed him—though, maybe, he didn't think of death. Whist, then, Dor," she added, to the boy.

"Don't cry," said Tod to the little chap, who had got the largest, brightest eyes I ever saw; "that will do no good, you know."

"I want Corry. Where's Corry gone?"

"She's gone up to God," answered Tod, speaking very gently. "She's gone to be a bright angel with Him in heaven."

"Will she fly down to me?" asked Dor, his great eyes shining through their tears on Tod.

"Yes," affirmed Tod, who had a theory of his own on the point, and used to think, when a little boy, that his mother was always near him, one of God's angels, keeping him from harm. "And after a while, you know, if you are good, you'll go to Corry and be an angel, too."

"God bless you, master!" interposed the woman. "He'll think of that always."

"Tod," I said, as we went out of the tent, "I don't think they are people to steal children."

"Who's to know what the man would do?" retorted Tod.

"A man with a dying child at home wouldn't be likely to harm another."

Tod did not answer. He stood still a moment, deliberating which way to go. Back to Alcester?—where a conveyance might be found to take us home, for the fatigue was telling on both of us, now that disappointment was prolonged, and I, at least, could hardly put one foot before another. Or down to the high road, and run the chance of some vehicle overtaking us? Or keep on amidst these fields and hedgerows, which would lead us home by a rather nearer way, but without chance of a lift? Tod made up his mind, and struck down the lane the way we had come. He was on first, and I saw him come to a sudden halt, and turn his head to me.

"Look here, Johnny!"

I looked as well as I could for the night and the trees, and saw something on the ground. A man had sunk down there, seemingly from exhaustion. His face was a tawny white, just like the dead child's; a stout stick and bundle of skewers lay beside him.

"Do you see the fellow, Johnny?"

"Has he fainted?"

"Fainted, or shamming it. I wonder if there's any water about?"

But the man opened his eyes; perhaps the sound of voices revived him. After looking at us a minute or two, he raised himself slowly on his elbow. Tod—the one thought uppermost in his mind—said something about Lena.

"The child's found, master!"

Tod seemed to give a leap. I know his heart did. "Found!"

"Been safe at home this long while."

"Who found her?"

"'Twas me, master."

"Where was she?" asked Tod, his tone softening. "Let us hear about it."

"I was making back for the town," (we supposed he meant Alcester,) "and missed the way; land about here's strange to me. Agoing through a bit of a grove, which didn't seem as if it was leading to nowhere, I heard a child crying. There was the little thing tied to a tree, stripped, and——"

"Stripped!" roared Tod.

"Stripped to the skin, save for a dirty old skirt that was tied round her. A woman carried her off to that spot, robbed her of her clothes, and left her there. Knowing where she must ha' been stole from—though you're accusing *me* of it, master—I untied her to lead her home, but her feet warn't used to the rough ground, and I made shift to carry her. A matter of three mile it were, and I be not good for much. I left her at home safe, and set off back. That's all, master."

"What were you doing here?" asked Tod, as considerably as if he had been speaking to a lord. "Resting?"

"Suppose I fell, master. I don't remember nothing, since I was tramping up the lane, till your voices came. I've had nought inside my lips to-day but a drink o' water."

"Did they give you nothing to eat at the house when you took the child home?"

He shook his head. "I saw the woman again, nobody else. She heard what I had to say about the child, and she never said 'Thank ye.'"

The man had been getting on his feet as he spoke, and caught up the skewers and the stout stick. But he reeled as he stood, and would have fallen again but for Tod. Tod gave him his arm.

"We are in for it, Johnny," said he aside to me. "Pity but I could be photographed—the Samaritan helping the destitute!"

"I'd not accept of ye, sir, but that I have a child sick at home, and want to get to her. There's a piece of bread in my pocket that was give me at a cottage to-day."

"Is your child sure to get well?" asked Tod, after a pause; won-

dering whether he could say anything of what had occurred, so as to break the news.

The man gazed right away into the distance, as if searching for an answer in the far-off star shining there.

"There's been a death-look in her face this day and night past, master. But the Lord's good to us all."

"And sometimes, when He takes children, it's done in mercy," said Tod. "Heaven is a better place than this."

"Ay," rejoined the man, who was leaning heavily on Tod, and could never have got home without him, unless he had crawled on hands and knees. "I've been sickly on and off for this year past; worse lately; and I've thought at times that if my own turn was coming, I'd be glad to see my children gone afore me."

"Oh, Tod!" I whispered, in a burst of repentance, "how could we have been so hard with this poor fellow, and roughly accused him of stealing Lena?" But Tod only gave me a knock with his elbow.

"I fancy it must be pleasant to think of a little child being an angel in heaven—a child that we've loved," said Tod.

"Ay, ay," said the man.

Tod had no courage to say more. He was not a parson. Presently he asked the man what tribe he belonged to—being a gipsy.

"I'm not a gipsy, master. Never was one yet. I and my wife are dark-complexioned by nature; living in the open air has made us darker; but I'm English born; Christian, too. My wife's Irish. We used to have a cart, and went about the country with crockery; but a year ago, when I got ill and lay in a lodging, the things were seized for rent and debt. Since then it's been hard lines with us. Yonder's my bit of a tent, master, and now I can get on alone. Thanking ye kindly."

"I am sorry I spoke harshly to you, to-day," said Tod. "Take this: it is all I have with me."

"I'll take it, master, for my child's sake; it may help to put the strength into her. Otherwise I'd not. We're honest; we've never begged. Thank ye both, masters, once again."

It was only a few shillings. Tod spent, and never had much in his pockets. "I wish it had been sovereigns," said he to me; "but we'll do something better for them tomorrow, Johnny. I'm sure the Pater will!"

As luck had it, a gentleman we knew was passing in his dog-cart when we got to the foot of the hill. He drove us home: and I could hardly get down, I was so stiff.

Lena was in bed, safe and sound. No damage, except the fright and the loss of her clothes. From what we could learn, the woman who took her off must have been concealed amidst the ricks when Tod put her there. Lena said the woman laid hold of her very soon, caught her

up, and put her hand over her mouth, to prevent her crying out; she could only give one scream. I ought to have heard it, only Mack was making such an awful row, hammering that iron. How far along fields and byeways the woman carried her, Lena could not be supposed to tell: "miles!" she said. Then the thief plunged amidst a few trees, took the child's things off, put on an old rag of a petticoat, and tied her loosely to a tree. Lena thought she could have got loose herself, but was too frightened to try; and just then the man, Jake, came up.

"I liked *him*," said Lena. "He carried me all the way home, that my feet should not hurt; but he had to sit down sometimes. He said he had a poor little girl who was nearly as badly off for clothes as that, but she did not want them now, she was too sick. He said he hoped my papa would find the woman, and put her in prison."

It is what the Pater intended to do, good chance helping him. But he did not reach home till after us, when all was quiet again, which was fortunate.

"I suppose you blame me for this?" cried Tod to his step-mother.

"No, I don't, Joseph," said Mrs. Todhetley. She called him Joseph nearly always, not liking to abbreviate his name, as some of us did. "It is so very common a thing for the children to be playing in the three-cornered field amidst the ricks, and no suspicion that danger could arise from it having ever been glanced at, I do not think any blame attaches to you."

"I am very sorry now for having done it," said Tod. "I shall never forget the fright to the last hour of my life."

He went straight to Molly, from Mrs. Todhetley, a look on his face that, when seen there, which was rare, the servants did not like. Defiance was rendered to Tod in the household. When anything should take off the good old Pater, Tod would be master. What he said to Molly nobody heard; but the woman was banging at the brass things for three days afterwards.

And when we went to see after poor Jake and his people, it was too late. The man, the tent, the living people, and the dead child—all were gone.

JOHNNY LUDLOW.



A RIVER-SIDE STORY.

BY K. S. MACQUOID.

"I AM told," said Mr. Severn Sparks, the chemist, to Mr. Chatterly, the solicitor, of Chesterford, "that our new Vicar may be shortly expected. He'll not go to the Vicarage, of course—Mrs. Lyndon and her daughter are there still. I suppose he'll put up at the Inn."

"No doubt—no doubt," and then the two worthies shook hands, and parted, with the comfortable feeling that they had settled the new-comer's arrangements in the only proper and possible manner.

There are very few lodgings to be had in Chesterford, but at the bottom of the straggling street leading from the market-place down to the river, a widow and her daughter, who rent one of the lesser houses, let a couple of clean, small rooms to single gentlemen—generally to artists or fishing amateurs. The house stands close to the irregular group of fishermen's cottages huddled together on the strip of waste land between the bottom of the street and the river, and is consequently very "handy" for the boats.

The widow's dark-eyed daughter had passed by Mr. Sparks and his friend while they spoke, and she smiled to herself at their words.

"Mother's right, then, after all," she said; "and it *is* the new Vicar. Well, I'm sure, we're honoured."

A strange clergyman had taken their rooms for a week on the previous night, and Mrs. Dean had intimated her suspicion of his being the new parson to her daughter, but had been laughed at for getting such a maggot in her head.

The lodger was standing at his open window, talking to a handsome blue-eyed boy, dressed like a fisherman.

"Then you go to school regularly, when it's not holiday-time?"

"Yes, sir; mother 'ud be rare and angered if I wurn't."

"Who is your mother—I mean what's your name, my boy?"

"Tommy Trantor, sir—fayther be Trantor the boatman." He looked up proudly. It was plain that the boatman of Chesterford was a well-known person.

"And what do you do with yourself in the holidays?" The boy's frank manner, and winning, smiling face took the stranger's fancy.

"Oh, I plays along of Sally, and sometimes I fishes, and sometimes"—the stress here suggested the intensity of the rare enjoyment,—
"fayther he has me along o' he in t'boat, but there beant often room."

"Well, here's something to buy a cake for Sally. Good day."

The boy pulled his cap, and ran up the street.

The landlady's daughter had come in, and was taking away the breakfast things.

"That seems a fine little lad. Do you know him?"

"Yes, sir; everyone knows the Trantors—he's the best boatman in the place, and fisherman too, as to that."

"I suppose he's the person to employ if one should want a boat. A steady, sober man is he?"

"Oh, yes, sir; I wouldn't mention him to you if he were not. Poor fellow! every one likes Trantor."

"Why poor fellow?"

Miss Dean blushed.

"Well, sir, I let the word slip. One don't like to speak against one's neighbours, because, you see, sir, it might come round and make words again. But his wife, sir—her temper's dreadful. I'm sure if that Tommy wurn't the sweetest little fellow goin', he'd run away—she leads him such a life."

"Ah, I think of going down to Goodrich this morning. Will you direct me to Trantor's cottage?"

Miss Dean was delighted to be of use, and she immediately gave a voluble, though somewhat misty, description of the precise situation of the cottage.

"They're so in and out, it's puzzling to know one from another," she said; "but you're sure to find it now, sir—sure to."

When he reached the cottages, he certainly did find it puzzling to guess which was the boatman's. They were all alike; almost all had blue woollen garments hanging out to dry in front, and little children playing on the door-step, and these were the signs by which Miss Dean had assured him he would find the cottage he wanted.

While he wandered up and down among them, he might have been on his way to Goodrich.

"Can you tell me where Trantor, the boatman, lives?" he said, at last, to a child apparently older than those he had hitherto met with.

The little girl looked at him out of a pair of bright blue eyes. He had not seen her face before, it was so lost in the shadow of the pink sun-bonnet she wore, perched up at the back of her head. She was a pretty little yellow-haired maiden, a fisherman's child by her dark-blue frock and stockings. It seemed to the stranger that he had seen her face before.

"Fayther bides here." She pointed to the cottage in front of which she was standing; a curly-headed little rogue, much younger, was playing at her feet.

"Is he in now, can I see him?"

"No;" she shook her head sadly.

"Can't you tell me where to find him? Perhaps your mother can."

The little head was shaken again, and the childish face had a sorrow-struck, frightened look in it. The stranger waited for her to speak.

"Mother can't neither. She ha' been in her tantrums with fayther; and fayther he be gone away. He said,"—the poor little thing began to sob pitifully—"as he couldn't bear it, and he'd sooner be at the bottom of the river."

The blue frock was snatched up to hide her face, but the heaving sobs burst forth now, uncontrolled. "Oh! Johnny, Johnny, what will we do without fayther?—he don't beat us, he don't. Oh! what will we do?"

The curly-headed child stopped his play for a minute.

"Dunna cry, Sally—naughty gals cries;" and then he stirred up the dirt-pudding he had been making with a bit of stick, and squeezed it firm with his chubby clayey fingers.

A sound came from within the cottage, and when the stranger looked up, Mrs. Trantor was standing in the doorway.

It was easy to see that she had been very pretty; her little girl had inherited her blue eyes and bright-coloured hair; her features were good, and her skin had been delicate; there was an angry glow over it now, and an insolence in her curved upper lip, that confirmed the child's story.

"What may you be wanting?" she said, rudely.

The stranger looked at her gravely, and a tinge of shame showed itself on her face.

"I wanted your husband's boat for the day, but I understand he is not in."

A boat for the day—it was exasperating to lose such a job, and Mrs. Trantor's eyes flamed afresh.

"Just his luck!" she said, passionately; "he's gone off in his sulks because something or another put him out, and the Lord knows where he is or when he'll be in."

"But couldn't this little girl—or you have an older child, I think—go and find out where he is? Not far off, I dare say."

"It's like enough not," she said, bitterly. And she jerked her head towards the "Three Bells," a little low public-house, which stood handy for the fishermen at the corner, where the street ended; leaving a sort of esplanade between it and the river, partly built over by the cottages, and partly used as drying ground.

She came forward a little, and shading her eyes with her hand, looked up the river.

"There's that good-for-nothing boy, Tommy, I'll be bound, at play up there—but he'll hide by the bend of the river. The boy be going to ruin, sure and certain; he won't take a word from me now, let alone a blow."

"How old is he?" the stranger asked.

"Old enough to know better, sir. Come Michaelmas, he'll be thirteen—a fine strapping boy, too; but as hard as a stone, when he do take a thing in his head."

"Boys generally are," said the stranger, quietly.

She stood in open-mouthed wonder. She had expected the universal sympathy her neighbours gave when she and Tommy had had "words."

"You spoke of blows just now," he went on; "are you not aware that boys always get beyond a woman's control at that age? I mean that scoldings and beatings from you now will only serve to make the child uncomfortable at home, and will very likely drive him forth to seek bad company."

"That be fine doctrine." Mrs. Trantor threw back her head and sneered to her heart's content. "You an't got boys o' your own, that's certain, or you'd know they must be guided, if you mean 'em to keep a straight course."

"I quite agree with you there; but I tell you again that, as a mother, you will lose all hold over that boy if you are violent with him. Stay," he held up his hand to enforce her silence; "by violence, I mean more than striking him. I mean angry words and unkind, gibing looks."

"You don't know what you're talking on." She would stop him. Nobody should keep her from speaking her mind. "A pretty thing to tell me how to manage my children. You've never even seen the boy."

"I have seen him, and I think he looks a good boy." He spoke more gently than ever. "But, still, he may prove an exception; he is, perhaps, a very bad boy; a liar, a thief; he drinks, perhaps, young as he is; but even if all this be the case, from your own showing, I think great allowance is to be made."

"How dare you say so?" The woman had grown so excited that she almost screamed, and one or two of her neighbours, attracted by the discussion, left their wash-tubs to listen, and stood now on the steps of their cottages, wiping the suds from their hands and arms. "Tommy be as good a boy as lives, unless he be put out of the way; and, for all he went off in a pet, he'll come home all right when he have had his play out."

"You seem a very violent person; it cannot be all right for your child to set you at defiance; if you managed him gently, you would do your duty by him, instead of tempting him to forget that which he owes you. I am a clergyman, and I advise you to think over what I have said."

Mrs. Trantor looked after him, subdued for the moment.

Then one of the neighbours made some jesting comment on her silence, and she darted at little Johnny, and gave him a smart box on the ear, for making his face so dirty.

She had four children and her husband to "do for," and yet her cot-

tage and her boys and girls were always fresh and clean. She was almost too energetic in her cleaning; she worked beyond her strength, and then vented her consequent irritation on every one who came within reach of her tongue.

The stranger made another inquiry for Trantor of a fisherman coming out of one of the cottages.

"It bean't narra a mossel o' use looking for he, measter; he be down beyont the bridge fishing."

"Never mind, I'll try and find him to-morrow," and he walked along beside the curving, winding river. "A dangerous bank for children," he thought; "not shelving even so much as a foot, it goes sheer down to the bottom. I expect lives are risked here constantly."

Half a mile further on, the road diverged from the river; he was unwilling to leave it; gorgeous-coloured dragon-flies darted in their sudden, right-angled fashion across his path; fluttering butterflies chased each other merrily, settling every now and then on the tall masses of willow-herb; but the prospect of inland country the road disclosed was so inviting that he followed it. One green wooded hill rose behind another, the foreground chequered with golden corn-fields and the emerald of turnips and mangolds; and beyond the hills again, melting into the horizon, blue distant mountains. He had ordered dinner at two o'clock, but it was past two before he reached home.

His landlady's daughter had her head stretched out of the upper window.

"There's something wrong up the river, sir. Will you please come here and see? I can't make it out."

The girl seemed beside herself with excitement.

"What is it? A crowd, or what?"

The girl made no answer; her eyes were strained in the direction of the river.

"Oh, oh! there were two black specks; now there's only one, and no one goes to help. Oh! run, sir! Be quick! Send some of the fishermen down, or the boy will be lost!"

The stranger hastened down to the cottages; but it was plain that help had been summoned before his arrival. Two men were running to the point where the boats were moored, and a crowd of women and children were standing in silence, just where he had found Sally Trantor.

"What has happened?" he asked.

"For the love of heaven, sir! go up and see," one of the older women said; "there be plenty on 'em, girls and boys, gone up to see what's a doin', but narra man among 'em; they be all away; you'll get there faster than the boat," she added, urgently. "It be up stream, and the light wherries be all out."

He was starting off, and then he stopped.

"Let a doctor know," he said, "and have hot blankets and hot water got ready in several of the cottages."

There was no need to ask where he was to go to ; the eyes of the group round the cottages were bent in one direction, towards the little bay, the swimming place of the village boys, hidden from sight by the bend of the river. Towards this point almost all the younger women, and a good many lads, were hastening. What the old women had told him was strictly true. The able-bodied men were all out fishing, except those two whom he had seen running down to the boats. He had soon overtaken one of the women, but he could get no clear explanation of what had happened. A lot of boys had been down at the creek playing, she said ; two had been seen far out in the water, and then one had been missed, and "then Jimmy Shuster ran screaming out that two on 'em was drowned, and calling for the boats, and then he run back again as fast as he'd comed."

"You don't know who the boys are?" he asked, while he ran on beside her.

"No more than you, sir. I've a brother o' my own there, and it be as like to be he as another."

Soon the line of hurrying helpers was hidden from the anxious group by the cottages. The landlady's daughter saw farther, for her window overlooked the intervening roofs. She saw that the knot of figures she had been watching so long was joined by those who left the cottages, and that while some stood by the river's edge, looking down into the water, the rest seemed busily occupied with something, or some one on the bank.

"One is saved," said the girl to herself, "and one is drowned."

A few minutes more of suspense, and she saw the boat going up the river. The two strong men were pulling with their utmost strength, but the current was so full against them that they seemed to move slowly.

The girl clasped her hands frantically.

"Faster ! faster !" she called out to them. "You could go faster if you tried."

The wind which blew her words back in her face might tell her they had two foes to contend with.

But they were nearing the creek. Some one stood up above the group on the bank, directing the boatmen by his gestures. It was the stranger, her mother's lodger.

The boat was stationary now ; the men had put the drag out ; they were dragging just where the one black speck went down. But that was so long ago. Could there be any hope ? The girl thought not.

Several of the old women from the cottages had gathered below the window by this time, and called to her to know what was doing.

"Nothing ! nothing ! They lean over the side yet. Ah !——" She drew a long, deep, shuddering breath, for the men were pulling hard at

the drag, and the figures on the bank rushed close to the water's edge in confused excitement.

"For the love of mercy speak, gal! What d'yc see? Is it my Johnny?" says an old hard-featured grandmother.

"I can't tell one from others so far off. But oh! save us! They have pulled something into the boat, and they are rowing back so hard, you can't count the oar-strokes."

"Here's Mr. Severn Sparks a-running down."

"And here comes the doctor," called the old woman; and the apothecary of Chesterford, followed by the bustling chemist, came hurrying into the midst of the agitated group of women.

"Well, who is it?" they asked. "Which cottage?"

No one could answer.

The doctor was too quick-witted to wait. He turned at once towards the creek.

Some of the lads had kept pace with the returning boat, and he soon came up with them.

Just a few words. But the doctor's face was very sad as he met the boat at the landing-place.

Slowly and reverently the men stepped forth, bearing between them the senseless body, only half covered with their jackets.

"Some one go down to the bridge for Trantor," said the doctor. "Sparks, you'd better go to the other boy at the creek." And then he walked beside the men, cautioning them as to their movements, and the way in which they supported their burthen.

The news spread in an awed whisper. The old hard-featured grandmother who had feared for her Johnny hurried to Trantor's cottage, and reached it before the doctor did.

Mrs. Trantor had come out once or twice to ask for news; but she was busy, and she had not stayed with the rest, though she had made blankets hot to help her neighbours, if need were.

She hardly had time to take in the old woman's words when the bearers reached her door with their burthen. Without a cry or a tear she came forward to meet them. She spread a blanket on the floor ready to receive her boy, and then she stood silently beside the doctor, watching his attempts, and ready to execute his orders almost before they were uttered. Only a stifled throat-sob told that the issue of all this careful, incessant effort was more to her than to anyone.

Long and unwearyingly they persevered. The stranger had come into the cottage, and he saw that the doctor's face grew more and more anxious as the hours passed.

The doctor rose up at last, and beckoning for another blanket, laid it gently over the body; then he went up to the mother.

"I'm afraid it's no use, Mrs. Trantor; it's hard to give up hope; but I fear we must do it now. Poor little Tommy! he was a fine lad."

He wrung her hand, but she made no answer, and suffered him to lead her to a chair at the farther end of the room from the corpse.

Then he beckoned to some of the women standing round the doorway, told them to fetch him if he was wanted, and passed out into the street.

The poor woman flung her apron over her head, and sat rocking to and fro, while one or two well-intentioned neighbours poured into her ears such stores of comfort as seemed to them suitable.

"Cry out loud and ease your heart, poor soul! He's taken from the evil to come; he's with the Lord who made him."

But there was no answering voice of lamentation, only the silent rocking and the covered face.

Some of the neighbours had taken little Sarah home, and kept her from the fearsome sight, but she had escaped, and came running in, looking round for her brother.

She stood checked and awe-struck. She had been told that he had been in the water; but Dick Beever had been in too, and he had walked home after a bit with the stranger and Mr. Sparks.

She looked up at the former now, and then she went to her mother.

"Mother, mother, what have they done with Tommy?"

The agony in the childish voice broke the spell that pressed on the poor woman; she pulled down her apron, and when she saw the little convulsed face, she clasped her arms round the child and wept passionately.

"You had best leave her," said the clergyman; "crying will relieve her, and her husband cannot be long now."

The women looked unwilling, but he spoke so earnestly that they followed when he led the way out of the house.

"Here comes the poor fellow," said one of the women. She pointed to a man who strode sullenly along, with his hat slouched over his eyes, at some little distance from the cottage.

Everyone knew that he had left it in anger that morning; and instinctively feeling that no one had a right to make or meddle between the bereaved pair, the loiterers disappeared from the pathway.

The fisherman stood in the entrance; he knew what must be in the only sitting-room, and he dared not face the sight.

While he stood hesitating, the cloth cap, which some one had hung on a peg against the wall, caught his eye.

His shoulders heaved convulsively, and then he leaned his head against the door-post, with a deep heavy sob.

The little girl started away from her mother at the sound, and she ran up to Trantor.

But he turned his face away, hiding it against the dark wood.

"Go out and play, Sally." Her mother's voice was so quiet that the child stared. "Let ffather 'bide a bit."

It was the first time in her life that Sally had been checked in caressing her father ; but there was something so new in his sobbing silence and in her mother's gentleness, that she slunk away without remonstrance ; not to play—the poor little heart was too full for that—she only went as far as the door-step, and there she sat, sometimes wondering why, when Tommy had bathed so often, on this one special day he should have been drowned, and then bursting into passionate fits of crying, as she remembered past play times, and how lonely she was now without Tommy.

For a few minutes after the child had gone out, there was silence within the cottage.

Then Mrs. Trantor rose up and went to her husband—

“Richard ! oh, Richard !”—and her arms were round his neck, and she pulled his hidden face on to her shoulder.

There is no grief like a strong man's grief ; it is terrible either to witness or to describe, and with Trantor's there was mingled a bitterness too deep for words to utter.

Only one murmur told her where the sting of sorrow lay.

“Oh, my boy—my boy !” he sobbed—“and I might have saved 'ee if I'd been nigher home.”

All this while his wife stood still, bearing the weight of his heavy head on her shoulder ; tears ran fast as rain down her cheeks, but scarcely a sob escaped. Every atom of the love the woman really bore her husband had gathered itself into the effort to bear with and soothe him now.

All that time she had stood helping the doctor, the clergyman's words had been stirring in her heart. She did not know how fervently he had prayed for her while he had been there, to all appearance an idler ; but now every moment it seemed to her more clear and distinct that Tommy had been taken from her evil training and violent example. She dared not meet her husband's eyes ; he must look on her as Tommy's murderer, for if she had not driven him away in anger this morning, he might not have gone bathing at all ; and even if he had gone, his father would have been at hand to caution him about the depth of water, or to save him.

All at once Trantor raised his head.

“I'd like to look at him, Polly.”

She lifted the corner of the sheet which the women had drawn over her boy, and the father looked once more on his little swollen face.

“Poor lamb !” he sobbed ; “poor little lamb !”

He took his wife's hand and pressed it, as she covered the face again. At his touch her self-control gave way in one violent burst of sorrow.

“Oh, Richard, what shall I do ? Don't you mind how I angered him this morning ? I'd nigh struck him, but for little Sally ; it's God's just judgment on my sin. I killed him with my hard words.”

The man was roused by her agony. She had not even thrown herself into his arms for comfort, but stood there, her face buried in her hands, trembling as with ague.

"Hush, hush, Polly!" he spoke kindly, and put his arm round her. "You mustn't take on so; we mayn't guess ourselves why God does things. I'm crabbed too, at times, so I've no call to lay blame on you."

"But, Richard, mayn't it be that He have taken Tommy away from bad example? for I be sure he's gone to heaven if ever a boy went there."

Her husband kissed her, and then he stood silent.

"It may be," he said, after a while; "it's only parsons as can tell things o' they sort. But look here, Polly, this we can do for ourselves: we two can take heed, and not set a bad pattern by little Sally; she be all we've got for comfort now."

And the lesson was taken home and brought forth fruit at last. I do not mean to say that Mrs. Trantor was at once cured of her vixenish, violent ways and words—bad habits are unlearned little by little; to this day, I believe, she often has to struggle against her impatient Self-will and Self-love; for is not Self-love—the habit of setting Self first, to the injury and neglect of others—the cause of all evil impulses? But she tries hard, and she is helped by the counsel and encouragement of her good Pastor. At the inquest held on little drowned Tommy, the strange gentleman announced himself as the new Vicar of Chesterford, and his ministry there has been truly blessed to the little town.

Sally is never in tears now as she leaves her mother's door, and I do not think there is a more peaceful household among any of the fishermen than Richard Trantor's.



ON THE BANKS OF THE WYE.

ON a bright, warm evening at the end of April I first entered the town of Ross, in Herefordshire. In itself no town could be more dull, uninteresting, and quiet: few towns can boast of a neighbourhood so attractive. In the past it is associated with the far-famed "Man of Ross"—a man "passing rich with forty pounds a year." The small house in which he lived may still be seen, though it is now almost in ruins. Its walls are covered with the names of hundreds and thousands of visitors—traces of the homage paid to one who has taught us so wondrous a lesson of Contentment. The town has many other pleasant associations with the past; and in the present and the future it is, and must continue, remarkable for its grand and beautiful scenery. From the windows of the Royal Hotel, I found the view a perfect burst of glory. The fine old river Wye rolling past majestically, winding in and out in the most picturesque and romantic manner; the green plains, bright with the tender freshness and beauty of spring; the small cottages dotted about here and there; the willows and reeds stacked up to dry in the fields; the far-off woods bounding the view, and leaving imagination to picture and wonder what lay beyond—all contributed marvellously to form a scene that could never be forgotten, and of which it seemed impossible ever to grow weary. A more intimate acquaintance with the neighbourhood only served to increase and confirm my admiration. The Wye itself, as you follow its windings for miles, opens at each step fresh beauties for wonder and for awe. It is teeming and overflowing, this beauteous river, with points both for poets and painter. Never have I so longed for the gift of a Turner's genius as when looking upon these wonderful scenes. The Wye, I think, may without exaggeration be considered the most picturesque river in England. The great marvel is, that, comparatively speaking, it is so little known and visited. The world rushes over to France, Switzerland, Italy—to all lands but its own beautiful and neglected spots of country. Of all the various places celebrated in the refined strains emanating from a poet's brain, or mentioned in the commonplace pages of Bradshaw, no scenery has so delighted me, so taken hold of my imagination and memory, as the banks of the Wye. The nearest approach to it was a hasty glimpse I once caught of the "banks of the blue Moselle," in travelling from Paris to Strasburg. It was certainly a wonderful view; it came and was gone so suddenly that I felt, when it was past, as if for one moment the gates of Paradise had been opened to my vision. These hasty glimpses some-

times take more effect upon one than a prolonged acquaintance does; in the same manner as a face one sees but for an instant may haunt your whole future life.

The ruins on the banks of the Wye, scattered here and there, are amongst not the least of its attractions. One of them is especially impressed on my memory—the ruins of Goodrich Castle. We—I and a friend, John—had strolled out of the town on the afternoon of one of the brightest, and sunniest, and hottest days I ever remember.

“Suppose we go to Goodrich Castle,” said John, and I heartily assented. After a walk of some distance, through the most exquisite scenery, a small copse or wood was reached. Upon emerging from this dark veil of trees, we again found ourselves by the banks of the river; as if it delighted to surprise the world by its winding freaks. In front rose the noble and stately pile, Goodrich Castle; and we both stood still and gazed in silence, scarcely daring to breathe lest the charm should break. A rude, but not unkind voice—that of the ferryman—dissolved the spell.

“Do you wish to cross, sirs?” he demanded, and we replied by stepping into his boat, which lay at hand.

“Have you many visitors here?” I asked.

“Pretty well, sir, in the fine months,” he replied. “But not many, when you come to think of the beauty of the place. All the world ought to see it, and I’ll be bound that ninety-nine people out of a hundred that you meet with have scarcely even *heard* of the ruins of Goodrich Castle.”

“That may be true enough. I know it has been my experience of the matter.”

We were soon landed on the other side of the river, and stepped rather reverently on to the grass. Quietly we ascended the slope towards the ruin, which seemed to gain in majesty and splendour as we neared it. We started some rooks; they flew over the building, and in circles, round and round, as if unable to get away to a distance. Cawing and screaming, and flapping their wings, the air resounded with the strange, mournful sound. As we reached the first ruined archway, I looked up and saw seated above, a raven, fierce and fiery, grim and gaunt. Involuntarily the words of that wonderful piece of word-poetry came across me. “Are you,” I cried, like Poe’s raven, “perched above for evermore?” The bird bowed its head until I could almost have fancied it understood me. Then it flapped its wings, but did not move from its post; we passed on, greeted with a farewell croak. I wonder what has become of it? It seemed to have been there for centuries. What strange scenes may it have witnessed? How many lovers’ vows have heard recorded—how many to be fulfilled, how many to be broken?

The scene upon which we entered was a very grand and solemn one.

The walls were decidedly in ruins, but massive, large and well preserved, We passed on to the slope beyond, where amongst the green grass rose the lesser ruins. We sat down, filled with the grandeur of the scene around. John, a young and romantic man, plucked a few flowers growing near him, and which happened to be forget-me-nots.

"Yorick," he said to me, "do you believe in the friendship of man for man?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Do you think it unmanly, undignified, even when carried to a romantic excess?"

"Surely not. Were David and Jonathan unmanly? And yet, where will you now find an example of such friendship as existed between them?"

"Could you entertain such friendship for some men?"

"I have dreamed of it, John. Yes, I do not doubt it."

"Take these flowers, Yorick," and he handed me the forget-me-nots he had picked. "Give me one in return. I, alone in the world, long for one true friend. Be that friend to me. Be my David, and I will be your Jonathan."

I shook my head. "I cannot, John. True I will be, please God, to every one, and to you, but we were never destined to be to each other as David and Jonathan. We differ too much in many of the main points essential to such friendship. You must seek further."

Years after, when I had found my Jonathan, I knew how rightly I had then judged. And I knew that he also was true, and that there are still some Davids and Jonathans in the world to keep up one's faith in human nature.

We had thus sat for an hour upon the grass, contemplating the ruins, listening to the cawing of the rooks, and talking in a dreamy and romantic strain, which may readily be pardoned if the surrounding influences are taken into consideration, when there came down a few startling drops of heavy rain.

The thick clouds had been gathering overhead unnoticed, until these drops warned us of a coming storm. We hastily got up, and sought shelter beneath one of the archways. At that moment a vivid flash of lightning was succeeded by a peal of thunder, which rolled and crashed around the ruined walls until my blood thrilled through me from head to foot. It was perhaps the grandest sight I shall ever witness in this world. During the whole time John and I never uttered a syllable, but we knew what was passing in each other's minds, as well as though we had been gifted with second-sight. For twenty minutes, crash after crash followed the vivid lightning with marvellous rapidity; and the rain descended in a stream, flooding the place. I had just begun to wonder if there was any chance of its abating, when a long dazzling flash seemed to fall from heaven, and immediately in front of us we

saw a tree felled to the ground. The lightning had struck it, and that which but a moment before had been full of life and strength, was now destroyed and useless.

"As the tree falls, so it shall lie," said John, reverently. And I trust that the lesson has never been forgotten by either.

As though satiated with its fury, the storm ceased, the clouds cleared away, the sun came out more powerfully than ever, and the prisoners were released. We crossed the water, gave "one last, long, lingering look" at the ruins, and wended our way back to the town. In passing through the churchyard, beautiful enough to have suggested "Gray's Elegy," we found the church open, and the building in possession of the cleaners. It was—and is—a fine old structure, large, solemn, and imposing-looking. What particularly took my fancy, in those days, was a huge vine-tree, growing inside the church, across one of the large east windows. It was, I think, a fitting ornament for the sacred edifice. Now and then, during the summer weather, a bird would fly in, perch upon the branches, and look round enquiringly on the multitude. Who first planted it, I know not. Most likely his body rests in the quiet churchyard; but, living or dead, I thank him for an act which awoke in me many sober and delightful thoughts.

"Yorick," said my friend, "I am in the mood for music. Come and play to me some of those grand and solemn passages which are only fitted for a church."

We went up to the magnificent instrument, and the sounds were soon swelling through the empty building, sending us both into ecstasies that so few know or dream of. For a whole hour John continued blowing for me, and when I joined him I saw that he had been weeping. I did not wonder at it; I knew him well. A better, a more noble-hearted, more manly fellow, never lived, in spite of the romance in his nature. And through all the troubles and trials which have come upon him since these days of early manhood, and through all its temptations, he has remained pure and upright; one of the few testimonies we have of the image of God in human nature. A little righteous leaven of humanity, that has sent me on my way rejoicing, with a joy that is second only to that Peace which passeth all understanding.

KATE FOLEY'S REMAINS.

NOT many years since, in one of my summer rambles, chance took me to a place which, for the nonce, I shall call Lynton. It was situated in a valley famed for its romantic scenery—a stupendous chasm being one of its chief features—and was consequently often a resting-place for those who, like myself, were of an itinerant character, and loved to see Nature in all her different phases.

I entered Lynton at sundown, and that same evening I made the acquaintance of two young fellows who were also in search of the picturesque, one an artist, and the other a brother-chip. As I found them companionable, good sort of fellows, and as they, like myself, were bent on doing the lions of the locality, we agreed to fraternize. Accordingly, the next morning, after breakfast, we started on our tour of inspection.

We were advised not to visit the chasm on that day, but first to ascend the hills by a craggy path, see the view from their summits, and then descend, by another route, to a cascade, which we were told was worth seeing.

After a couple of hours' wandering on the hills, we descended, among beetling rocks, to a small dell, commanding a view of the waterfall. Nothing could be more inviting to three tired tourists, and down we sat on the green sward, and commenced an attack on the good things we had brought with us.

A place more inviting to an artist, more inspiring to a poet, or more alluring to an indolent and dreamy fellow, such as I was, could not be imagined. My artist-friend, whose name was Oram, as soon as his appetite was appeased, pulled out his materials, and began to sketch, while I and Goff stretched ourselves lazily on the grass, and commenced smoking.

It was a spot to produce thought and feeling, rather than conversation, and for some time Goff and I smoked in silence, while Oram industriously plied his pencil. Presently there was a rustling among the bushes, and, an instant afterwards, a large dog came bounding towards us, with a friendly sort of gambol; and then leaping around us, and dashing in amongst the bottles and glasses, seemed to be challenging us to a game of sport.

A few minutes later, I heard a clear, musical voice calling, "Nero, Nero! where are you?"

I started up. Just at that moment the underwood was thrust on one

side, and a girl, young and beautiful, glowing with health, and breathless with her chase after Nero, burst suddenly upon my vision.

The moment she saw us, she paused and drew back. How lovely she looked, as she stood there, with a soft blush suffusing her cheeks, her fine eyes, shaded by long, dark lashes! She was evidently alarmed—in that sort of beautiful disorder which is so enchanting in the young. She advanced a step or two, and then again hesitated.

I sprang to my feet, and doffing my "wide-awake," approached her, saying, "Pardon me, young lady, but your dog seems determined to make our acquaintance. He's a fine fellow, though rather rough, I should think, for a lady's dog." And, as if to sustain the character I had given him, Nero began to jump about me in a rather troublesome manner.

"Down, Nero! down! Quiet, sir!" and she menaced him with her finger.

Nero obeyed, at least for the moment. He lay down, looking from one to the other; then he whined, gave a short, sharp bark, and springing up, with his tail lowered, raced hither and thither, yelping and barking, as though determined to enjoy himself in spite of us.

At this moment another actor appeared upon the scene. It was a tall, aristocratic woman, considerably past fifty, and yet not old-looking. There was something about her tone, manner, and carriage, which instantly convinced me that I was in the presence of a gentlewoman. Nero seemed to acknowledge her supremacy at once, for his gambols ceased, and he sought the sheltering veil of the younger lady's skirts.

The old duchess (she might have been one, for aught I knew, so grand was her air), looked at us both inquiringly. I replied, in a few words, explanatory and apologetic, and she received them with dignified courtesy. She walked across the greensward, stopping to look at, and say a few complimentary words of, my friend's sketch; and then she and her daughter—the former with a stiff bow, and the latter in glowing and beautiful confusion—disappeared up a path on the opposite side of the dell. Nero accompanied them to the edge of the wood, and then turned round and looked at me, as though to ask if I was not coming too.

"Go on, old fellow," I said: "go on; you don't belong to me."

All the way homeward, and during the rest of that day, I could think of nothing but the beautiful girl whose acquaintance, if I may so call it, I had thus strangely made, and at night I dreamt of her. I awoke in the midst of it, but her clear, ringing voice was still sounding in my ear. I confess that this girl (the fairy of the dell, Oram called her), had made a deep impression on me. Her appearance, as she issued from the little wooded pathway, and the timid glances which, from time to time, stole out from under her dark eyelashes, were photographed upon my memory.

We started on the following morning for the chasm. As we passed down the street, just as we got opposite the gate of a neat white cottage, which I had before noticed, on account of its pretty garden and embowered porch, my friend Nero bounded over the gate, and came to my side, wagging his tail by way of welcome. He followed me some distance out of the town, and then reluctantly turned about and went homeward.

"That's a funny dog," said Goff. "Anyone, to see him and you, would think you were old friends."

"It is strange," I replied. "The only way I can account for it is by supposing that he takes me for some one he has formerly known."

"Possibly," was my friend's answer, and the subject dropped.

Entering the Chasm from the Vale of the Lynn, the sudden change in the scene was most striking. The green landscape of the valley, with its hills dappled with heath and gorse, its flocks and herds, and its richly-cultured meadows, was suddenly exchanged for solitude the most profound. Rocks, abrupt and vast, rose on either side.

It often happens that our first view of that which is celebrated, and of which we had formed an exalted, perhaps an exaggerated, notion, does not impress us as we expected it would, because it does not realize our preconceived ideas. It was not so in the present instance, for the scene was far grander than I had anticipated.

A mountain riven in twain : on either side precipitous cliffs, forcing their shattered and craggy heads into the clouds, and shaggy with the dark foliage which grew out of chinks in their sides, hung frowning over the narrow pass, and formed a scene unrivalled in romantic effect. I was obliged to stop and gaze—my mind seemed dwarfed by the contemplation of a scene so sublime. I tried to realize the stupendous power which could thus rend asunder these solid rocks : the mighty shock, as the riven mountain crashed over into the valley, shaking the earth to its very centre. The further we penetrated into the pass, where, at every winding of the little road, a fresh picture of huge and wildly-grouped rocks was presented to our view, the more imposing became the scene.

On we went, each moment the precipices becoming more and more rugged and majestic, as they, one after the other, enfolded us in their embrace, till we came to the two great features of the chasm—Heron's Crag and the Valley of Stones : the first a lofty precipice, and the latter a chaotic mass of black ironstone, scattered about in wild disorder.

I was gazing up with breathless awe at the towering crag when I was startled to see, close to its very verge, a solitary human figure.

"Good heavens !" I exclaimed, "who is that up there ?"

"That, sir !" answered the guide, following my gaze. "Oh ! it's only Miss Kate."

"Miss Kate ! What Miss Kate ?" I asked.

"Miss Kate Foley, sir; she as lives at the white cottage with the pretty garden."

"Has she got a black dog called Nero?"

"She has, sir."

"She's mad!" cried Oram, emphatically. "It makes me giddy to look at her."

"There ain't no danger, as far as that goes," said the guide; "but as you say, sir, it's rather a maddish sort of a thing for a young lady to do; and there be some as says she is a bit crackey in her head, at times."

"Mad as a March hare," exclaimed Goff; "I thought so yesterday. She's a witch, and the old lady and the dog are her familiars. Look now!—there!—you see she's vanished; and didn't you hear a shriek in the air?"

"No!" I replied, "nor you either."

"But I did, though, or something very like it."

"I think your joke is somewhat out of place," I answered, rather tartly.

"You mustn't mind him," put in Oram; "he's nothing if he's not sensational."

"I beg your pardon, if I have offended you," said Goff; "but, seriously, I did hear something."

"The cry of a bird," suggested Oram.

"Well, the cry of a bird, if you like."

I was annoyed with Goff, and I was annoyed with myself for being annoyed; but as I felt a strange interest in the girl, which I did not wish them to notice, I thought the best thing I could do was to change the subject to some extent by asking the guide for some information as to her and her mother.

"Well, sir," replied the guide, "I can't tell you much about 'em, because nobody in Lynton, 'cept Lawyer Prowse, knows who they are, or where they came from. They come here about fifteen or sixteen months ago, and as I told you, people did say as Miss Kate was rather cracky, disap'inted in love, or something o' that sort; but there, to my thinking, the mother's the most singularest of the two."

"What's the matter with her?"

"Well, sir, it ain't exactly what's the matter with her: you see, this is how it is: one day up drives a po'-chay to the King's Arms, and out gets the old lady, all alone. She goes to Lawyer Prowse, who'd got that white cottage to sell, and she there and then buys it, furniture and all, just as it stands, and pays for it in bank notes."

"That was rather an off-hand piece of business, certainly; but there's nothing so very singular in it after all."

"Well, it ain't exactly that, sir; you see, she pays ready money for all she has."

After a good deal of beating about the bush, I discovered that, in

Lynton, it was not considered good manners to keep your affairs to yourself; and as Mrs. Foley made no acquaintance, and paid for every thing as she had it, no one had an opportunity of making inquiries, in order to satisfy their curiosity as to her antecedents. This sort of reticence and exclusiveness rendered her, in the eyes of the good people of Lynton, a suspicious character; for, they argued, where there was secrecy, there must be something to conceal; and where there was concealment there must be something wrong; and from all I could gather from our guide, there never had been, since Lynton was a town, so fertile and yet so unsatisfactory a subject of speculation as Kate Foley and her mother.

That same evening, we were sitting after dinner, enjoying our tumblers of Irish whisky, when in rushed the landlord, with a face pale as a ghost.

"What's the matter?" asked Goff, who was the first to notice his agitation.

"Matter enough, gentlemen," he replied. "There's been an accident up at the Crag. A young lady has"—he paused, and then added, "fallen off, and been killed."

"A young lady!" I exclaimed; "not Miss Foley, I hope."

"That's who it is, sir: it's very horrible, isn't it."

"Good heavens!" cried Goff; "she must have fallen off while we were there. You laughed at me because I said I heard a shriek: now, what do you think?"

"Why did you pause, landlord," I asked, "and then add 'fallen off, and been killed?'"

"Because, sir, there be some as says she flung herself off."

"What has given rise to such a suspicion?"

"Why, sir, two young women as was coming home over the hills from Clearton saw her sitting among the rocks, crying. The moment she saw them, she wiped her eyes, and got up; but though she tried to be cheerful, her manner was, they say, very strange. About twenty minutes after this, they again saw her, this time mounted right up on Heron's Crag; the next instant she disappeared; how, they don't know; but they thought they heard a faint scream; at any rate, she's not been seen since, and ain't been home all day."

"Has any search been made?" I asked.

"Not yet; they are going up the Chasm almost directly."

"What say you?" I asked of my companions. "Shall we go too?"

"With all my heart," responded Goff. "Who knows but, after all, she may not be dead!"

We started, and found a number of persons assembled at the entrance to the Chasm. A few minutes later we were joined by several men, among whom was Hawkins, the man who had been our guide in the morning. They had brought poles and ropes, and other appliances for climbing, and we all started at a rapid pace.

At last we reached the foot of the precipice, and the search was commenced, and continued for more than half an hour; but though every rock upon which she could have fallen was climbed, and every rift and crevice searched, no sign of the poor girl could be discovered.

Heron's Crag was in the shape of an irregular V, and formed a sort of promontory, which jutted out into the valley. It therefore had two sides, and it was now suggested that though she had been last seen standing on the side we had searched, that on the western side the precipice was lower, and that if she had fallen or slipped, she would have rolled down on that side.

The idea was so feasible that we all started for the other side of the Crag. We had hardly, as it were, doubled the Cape, when my eyes were attracted by a fragment of a dress, or a shawl, or something of that kind, which, having been caught by a projection of rock, hung swaying and fluttering in the air. I called the attention of my companions to this, and they seemed to think it a harbinger of success. For my own part, I did not think so; on the contrary, when my eye first fell upon it, my heart sank within me, as up to that moment I had been cherishing a hope that after all it might be a mistake, and that I might yet see her, on our return, alive and well at her mother's cottage; but here was a too convincing proof of an accident having occurred to allow me to cherish that hope any longer.

At this point we met with another check. Anything descending in a perpendicular line from the shawl would fall on a sort of terrace or ledge of rock, about a third of the way down, and this could not be reached from below.

To make sure that, in case the body had fallen on the ledge, it had not rolled off, we searched minutely the rocks at the base of the precipice, but without discovering it. Still as if to urge us to fresh exertions, several of the bystanders affirmed that they could hear cries or groans as of a person in distress or pain. I listened attentively, and at last I did hear a noise of some sort, and whatever it might be, it evidently came either from the ledge or from the precipice above it.

There was now nothing left but to go up to the summit of the crag and descend to the ledge from the crown of the precipice.

We had, therefore, to retrace our steps, for there was no way of reaching the crag, except from the valley on the other side. By the time we got back to the village the sun had set, but the moon, which was just at its full, was already high in the heavens. After having obtained such ropes, stakes, and other materials as were necessary for descending, I and my two friends, with our guide of the morning, who was an experienced cragsman, again started on our melancholy, but exciting errand.

It was a night of extraordinary beauty; not a cloud dimmed the stainless blue of the heavens, and the moon, which had an almost tropical

brilliancy, bathed the whole landscape in a flood of clear but mellow light. Never was a more beautiful or more tranquil picture than that which met our view as we ascended the wooded slope which led us to our destination.

We had started with a goodly number of idlers ; but, when the path became more and more rugged and dangerous, these gradually fell off, till on arriving at the foot of the crag itself, we found our party diminished to six. I did not wonder at this, for though the light was bright and clear, the moon threw shadows about our path which were very deceptive, and which considerably increased the dangers of the ascent. Had I not been buoyed up by the hope that the cries and groans we had heard proceeded from the poor girl herself, and that if we persevered we might rescue her before she succumbed to the injuries inflicted on her by her fall, I do not think I should have pressed on so eagerly.

The path we now had to ascend was more steep and dangerous than any we had previously attempted. A slip or a false step would in all probability be fatal, and, to make matters worse, the side of the crag up which we had to climb was in deep shadow, and the ground slippery with dew.

"I think, sir," said Hawkins, "that we had better rest here awhile."

"I think so, too," replied Oram ; "and being of a provident turn, I've brought a flask of brandy ; so, in the meantime, we'll take a pull at that."

We had hardly done so when the long, whining, melancholy howling of a dog fell upon our ears. How this acted upon the minds and hearts of the others, I cannot say ; but to me it seemed that the sound came from the poor girl's dog, and that he was reproaching us for our delay.

"Time may be precious," I said, as I rose up ; "let us be moving."

With alacrity we all sprang forward, and in about twenty minutes found ourselves on the Crag.

We were now on a sort of plateau, and we had not advanced far when I was startled by the barking and yelping of a dog. In another instant Nero was by my side, manifesting evident tokens of recognition and satisfaction, and then, going on before us, he led the way to the very spot which the guide had marked for his descent.

The preparations for this were soon made ; a large stake was driven into the ground, some distance from the edge of the cliff, to which was affixed a long rope, of sufficient strength to bear the weight of a man, and of more than sufficient length to reach the ledge. Fastening the other end round his body, taking a coil of it on his left arm, and laying hold of the part attached to the stake with both hands, Hawkins threw himself over the brow of the cliff, and disappeared from our sight.

He had been over the precipice some minutes, and had made no sign, when a strange sort of presentiment came over me that, unless I

went down after him, something would go wrong. My friends, and the two remaining men, used all their eloquence to persuade me to give up the idea. It was of no use, however, I only laughed at their fears, and another stake having been driven in, somewhat to the right of the other, and all being ready, I prepared to descend. The shelving nature of the ground made the approach to the verge rather difficult, and I had not advanced three steps, when my feet went from under me, and I slipped down several feet, till I was brought up by the rope. This unnerved me a little, and I had to sit still for a moment or two to recover my equanimity. Then I launched myself over the precipice.

Hanging suspended from a high cliff, some hundreds of feet from its base, with nothing to prevent you falling among the rocks below but a small rope, is not a situation to be coveted, and my friends' warnings came across my mind with unpleasant distinctness. I looked down once, but dared not do so again, for the abyss appeared so deep and awful, that it made me dizzy. Shuddering to think what my fate would be if I should fall, I shut my eyes and clung tightly to the rope to prevent the catastrophe I had dreaded.

I had descended for some distance, but no ledge made its appearance, and I began to think I had been out in my calculation, and that my rope would not reach it. However, a few moments later I saw, a short distance below me, a broad bit of ledge which I knew was the one I sought, and the next instant I was safely landed upon it.

The first thing I did was to cast my eye along it for the poor girl in whose fate I was so interested; but I could see nothing of her—in fact, nothing but some pieces of rock which had fallen from the cliff above. I was just about to look round for Hawkins, when I heard on my left a loud halloo from below. I knew it must come from the guide, and advancing to the extreme end of the ledge, I called to know what was the matter, and what I could do to assist him. The voice came up from below. "Don't be scared, sir, I'm all right at present; I saw you coming down, so I waited. Can you hear what I say?"

"Yes," I replied, "perfectly well."

"All right; now listen. I missed the ledge. That I didn't mind, for I saw something down here as I took for a piece of poor Miss Kate's dress. But what's the matter is this; my rope's cut by the rocks, I can see the frayed strands about eight or nine feet above my head; but I'm all right, for my feet are resting on a crag."

"Well," I replied, "what do you want me to do?"

"I think I heard you say this morning as you was a bit of a sailor—can you tie a bowline?"

"Yes. What then?"

"You must go up; but I say, sir," he continued, "do you see nothing of poor Miss Kate on the ledge?"

"Not a sign."

"Ah! I'm sorry, poor thing! what can have become of her?"

"Go on," I said; "what am I to do when I get to the top?"

"Loosen the line from your stake, and fasten one end to mine. Then make a bowline with the other end round my line, and send it down to me."

"I see," I answered; "I hope it will be long enough."

"That's just it, sir," was the answer.

I reached the surface, how, I hardly know. I did exactly as I had been directed, and when I had done so, I payed out the rope till I came to the end. I then called to him over the cliff, "All out; does it reach you?"

"The answer was some time coming back, and then it came faintly:

"No, too short."

"What's to be done now?" I asked.

"Are you afraid to come down without being tied?"

"No."

"Then, shift your line back to your own stake. Mind you don't let go the end, or I'm done for, for I can't stand here long; and then lower yourself on to the ledge."

"I'm down," I said, when I had reached it; "what now?"

"Is there anything you can fasten a line to up there?"

"Yes, a crag just like a cleat."

"Haul up as much line as will give you bight enough to make fast; then call to them above to let go the upper end; mind and hold fast when they do, that it don't strike you, and knock you off; then make fast the end, loosen the bight, and lower this end to me." In a minute I had done all this, and with one end fast to my rocky cleat, I lowered the other to the brave fellow below. In another minute, to my intense satisfaction, I heard his voice: "All right; make fast."

"It's done," I answered; "what next?"

The only answer I got was a jerk on the line, and on looking down, I saw the guide with his feet pressed against the sides of the precipice, commence, hand over hand, his dangerous ascent. The look-down was so tremendous that I was obliged to draw back, and standing thus, I watched each strain on his rope as though my own life depended on it. Suddenly the line gave an extra jerk; and then the tension slackened altogether. My heart leaped into my throat, as I stood listening for a cry or sound; I felt so sure that some horrible catastrophe had occurred, that I had not the power to move, so as to look down to see if what I dreaded were true. A minute or more elapsed, when, just as I was about to make a movement towards the edge to ascertain the real state of things, I fancied I saw the tension of the rope renewed. In another instant the pulls and jerks showed me that he had only been resting, and a few minutes later his head appeared above the side of the ledge. Aided by me, he scrambled to my side.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed, as he threw himself down to recover his strength and his breath. "A tough night's work, sir; and all to no purpose."

"I see you've got the shawl, sir," he continued, noticing it as it lay on the ground.

"Yes," I answered; "I secured that as I came down the first time."

"It's Miss Kate's," he replied; "there's no mistake about it; I've seen her wear it hundreds of times."

I shall not stop to detail minutely how we reached the plateau, but merely mention that when we had done so, and got our traps together, Nero and the shawl, though I knew that I had brought it up with me, were nowhere to be seen.

Our efforts to recover the poor girl's body did not end here, but though they were continued next day, and for many days afterwards, and though a reward was offered by her mother for its recovery, or for any information respecting her, nothing was heard of Kate Foley, nor were her remains discovered.

POSTSCRIPT.—There was certainly something mysterious in this sudden and entire disappearance of Kate Foley. But, as I have always found that there is a solution to every mystery, I rested in the hope that in this case, as in all others, something would eventually turn up to solve it.

Time, we are told, works wonders, and patience has its reward; but three or four years passed over my head without anything occurring to aid me, so that I began to think Time, in this case, would not do his work, and that my patience was not to be rewarded. Still, it came at last.

It happened thus:—The acquaintance with Oram, commenced at Lynton, had ripened into a steady friendship. Goff was a very good fellow, and I did not drop his acquaintance. But he got married, while Oram and I were bachelors, and were thus thrown more together. It was a few days before Christmas, and we were sitting in his study, enjoying our weeds, and lamenting that we had no invitations for the holidays. We had just agreed to dine together at my chambers, when there came a loud rap and ring, and, a minute or two later, the landlady brought in a card, saying there was a gentleman waiting.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Oram, looking at the card, "bring him up—bring him up!" and then he went on: "The funniest thing in life; it's a fellow I've not seen for years!"

At this moment a tall, handsome man, of about five-and-thirty, entered the room, who, after being heartily welcomed, was introduced to me as Mr. Wentworth.

After a little conversation, I found that he had been travelling or living abroad for the last five years, but had returned home, and was living in Hampshire.

"I had some trouble to get your address, Jack," said Mr. Wentworth; "but I was determined to find you out, for I want to introduce you to my wife. You heard that I was married?"

"No," replied Oram, "I lost sight of you altogether."

"Well, never mind; I'm going back, the day after to-morrow, and I shall take you with me. You must spend Christmas with us."

"No, no," exclaimed Oram, "I can't do that. I'll come down for the New Year; but I'm engaged for Christmas Day."

"Nonsense!" I put in; "I'm not going to have you stop in town for me. Don't mind what he says, Mr. Wentworth; he can go if he likes."

"No, hang it! that won't do. You took compassion on me, when I had the prospect of nothing but a chop in my study, and I'm not going to leave you alone in your glory."

"Well," said Wentworth, "can't we make a compromise? Can't your friend come too?"

"Of course he can!" struck in Oram; "and, what's more, as you wish it, he shall."

At last I consented, and, two days after, we all three started from Waterloo Station, for Hack Hall, Mr. Wentworth's place; where we arrived just in time to be introduced, and then to dress for dinner. Mrs. Wentworth had two lady friends staying with her. Altogether, we made up a party of six.

Mrs. Wentworth was a nice-looking, very agreeable woman, but there was something in her manner that I could not make out; besides which, I seemed to have a vague idea that I had at one time or other seen her, or some one like her.

After dinner, when the ladies had gone up stairs—we had drawn round the fire, and old times came upon the tapis—Oram mentioned how we had first met at Lynton.

"Lynton!" exclaimed our host. "I know Lynton."

"It's a delightful place?" said I, "and I enjoyed my stay there very much."

"Yes," said Oram, laughing; "searching after the mortal remains of a young lady who, if I may be allowed the expression, seemed to have been spirited away by the old gentleman!"

"And were you successful in your search?" asked Wentworth.

"No," replied Oram; "but he very nearly left his own among the rocks as a monument of misdirected perseverance."

"Come, come!" cried Wentworth; "this is tantalizing. Let's have a true and particular account of the matter."

Accordingly I gave it, and when I had done Mr. Wentworth laughed most immoderately. When he recovered himself, he said: "You will think it strange; but, though Kate Foley was a relative of mine, and though I understood that she disappeared in a rather mysterious manner, I never heard a word of all this before."

"Kate Foley a relation of yours!" I was just in the act of exclaiming, when a servant entered the room, followed by a large black dog, who rushed in to welcome his master. I recognized the dog in an instant as my old friend Nero. "Why," I cried, "that's her dog—that's Nero!"

"Yes, that's Kate's dog; and when you go up stairs I shall have the pleasure of introducing you to Kate herself."

"What! Kate Foley?"

"No," he replied; "not Kate Foley, but Kate Wentworth."

"Nonsense!" cried Oram; "you don't mean to tell me that the amiable lady who carved our turkey is the very person whose remains we searched for among the Lynton rocks?"

"The very same!"

"Then, I think," said Oram, "it's our turn now to ask for a key to this mystery. Let us have a full, true, and particular account."

"You shall," replied Wentworth, and commenced thus: "Mrs. Foley, Kate's mother, was my father's sister, and, of course, my aunt. She was, I may say, a regular Wentworth: that is to say, she had a strong and resolute will. She married a Dr. Foley—a fine old fellow, a learned man, and a gentleman, but no more fit to have the management of money than a baby; and so my aunt managed both him and his cash-box, and during his life had her own way entirely. Well, Kate was an only child, and so was I. When we grew up we fell in love, and, with the consent of both families, we were engaged: in fact, the day for our marriage was fixed. But Dr. Foley died very suddenly, and the wedding had to be put off. My father was appointed Kate's guardian. This, somehow, brought the two Wentworth wills into collision, and they ended by quarrelling. My father, having the power, had his way; but my aunt, to spite us—for I and Kate had taken my father's side in the dispute—took herself and Kate off, unknown to anyone, and buried herself away in the country, nobody knew where. It nearly broke Kate's heart, but she was true as steel, and, spite of her mother's vigilance, she contrived, after a time, to write to me. You see, my aunt forgot that both Kate and I had the Wentworth blood in our veins, and were not to be circumvented after that fashion. I do not for a moment advocate a disregard of maternal authority; but I could not see why, on account of a caprice on the part of my aunt, a solemn compact which had been entered into by her and my uncle before his death, and which had occupied the poor old doctor's last thoughts, should be broken, and two persons made miserable for life. Therefore, as soon as I discovered where Kate was, I started off, and, as she wanted about six months of her majority, we agreed to wait till then; and eventually, on that memorable August morning, she took French leave, and eloped with me."

"But," I said, "did you not write to the old lady?"

"Yes; as soon as the knot was tied, both Kate and I wrote; but she

never replied. About a month afterwards, when we went down to Lynton, we found the cottage shut up and the old lady gone. After this Kate and I went abroad, and we heard nothing of her mother till one day, while we were at Lucerne, we had a letter from her, asking *us to forgive her*. Well, of course, after this, all was right, and my aunt acted the tender mother to perfection till her death, which happened about a year since. She was a strange woman, and I believe liked me all the better for having outwitted her. But come, let us go up to the drawing-room. I have no doubt you would like to have another, though not a last, look at Kate Foley's remains."

THE HUNGRY SEA.

THE fierce wind drove o'er hedgerow and lea,
It bowed the grasses, it broke the tree,—
It shivered the topmost branch of the tree !
And it buried my love in the deep, deep sea,
In the dark lone grave of the hungry sea,—
Woe is me !

The bonnie white daisy closed her e'e,
And bent to the blast that swept the lea,—
Blossom and grass bowed low on the lea,
But white sails dipped and sank in the sea ;
They dipped and sank in the pitiless sea !
Woe is me !

'Neath the mother's breast in the leafy tree,
Nestled and crept her birdies wee,
Nor heeded the blast, though weak and wee.
But no mother can save on the stormy sea ;
Deaf to her cry is the merciless sea !
Woe is me !

Oh, well for the fishers of Galilee,
When they left their nets by that inland sea,
To follow Him who walked on the sea ;
At whose word the pitiless waves did flee—
The hungry, insatiate waves did flee,
And left them free !

Golden the light on flower and tree
In the land where my sailor waits for me,—
The country of heaven, that has no sea—
No ruthless, moaning, terrible sea ;
There is the haven where I would be !

FRANCES FREELING BRODERIP.

OUR LOG-BOOK.

SHALL any excuse be required of us for devoting a few lines to this unique book of the Queen's, which during the past fortnight has been on the lips of us all? Or will our readers acquit us of blame for travelling for a moment from our proper province into that inner world of private interests and joys, and hopes, and fears, which, nevertheless, is as full of pathetic changefulness as the most tragic work of art? We feel that we need no excuse, and that it is our duty, as loyal and loving subjects, to record our impressions. The book is a gracious gift from a Sovereign to her people; yet its uniqueness chiefly consists in the truthfulness and trustfulness which so sets the woman above the Queen, that by a genuine touch of poetry, the lowliest record of every-day things in the past is converted into a clear burnished mirror, in which Englishmen and Englishwomen may behold their better selves—that in them which strives, aspires, hopes, and fears, and reaches forward to the perfect purity which, star-like, heralds perfect love. True it is that—

“ The past doth always win
A glory from its being far ;
And orbs into the perfect star
We saw not, when we moved therein.”

And no doubt much in the Queen's book derives a kind of lyrical value from the simple manner in which the past and the present are brought into touching contrast, as in the description of the pleasant visit to Taymouth, and the affecting note appended to it, with such a reticence that tells more than the best-chosen words could do. But the essential value of the book lies deeper—in the unconscious and unlaboured freedom with which it has been written, and the self-consciousness and self-denial which has drawn it from its place among the cherished treasures of the womanly heart to appear in almost every drawing-room in the land. There may often be a sort of secret half-sentimental pleasure in nursing one's own past, and the ideal that imparted light and beauty to all its details, and in softly shading it by the obscured glasses of artistic form to be the delight of others. But our Queen takes from its place what had lain nearest her own heart, and gives it away to lighten other lives, and help her subjects the better to understand themselves by appreciating humanly her loss, and placing themselves in her position, as she has sought to place herself in theirs. Viewed in the light of those pathetic changes which called forth the murmurs that doubtless led the Queen to agree to issue this journal, the commonest anec-

dotes and descriptions taken on a kind of dramatic hue, and we have, if not art, at least the substance in which art has its root. For all the scaffolding of royalty disappears; and as that ideal is the highest which is the most broadly human, we have here a lofty ideal, not elaborated through any arbitrary or foreign form, but enshrined in the events of a truthful and gently unfolding life, sympathetically related to all that can interest and aid humanity, and wondrously independent of those forms of rank and court amid which it is compelled to develop itself, yet which it brightens up with such a glow of tenderness, and nobleness, and purity as perhaps no female Sovereign ever before shed over the insignia of her office. It is this beautiful and unconscious consistency between inner and outer in the life of Queen Victoria that lends such a charm to this simple book. From first to last she has lived in such an atmosphere, and with such purposes, that she can afford to make all her people her confidants; and surely when she calls us to be witnesses against the ungallant and unworthy who have raised their voices in murmurs against the afflicted, whose high worldly station seemed to intensify instead of lightening the sorrow and the loss, it is our part to read faithfully and witness as our hearts direct us on her behalf. And surely no Englishman could read this work untouched; the highest lady in the land begs for justice, and the hearts and the honour of Englishmen are yet such as to prove that "chivalry has not vanished from the earth."

To turn from a record of real life, with a peculiar touch of poetry lying behind it, to one of Mr. William Gilbert's works, is perhaps as easy a transition as could be made in the present day from autobiography to fiction. Mr. Gilbert is noted for a peculiar power in so adjusting the focus of the imaginative *camera obscura* to single and exceptional groups of fact, that notwithstanding weird and morbid elements, the whole is caught and preserved with such an instant clearness, faithfulness, and colourlessness, that very often his most remarkable ideal creations might pass for pre-Raphaelite records of most minute and prolonged observation. Hence it is that Mr. Gilbert has been called the Defoe of our century. Yet there are some very remarkable differences. Defoe is uniformly most powerful when he projects the simple, common, and universal feeling into singular and exceptional positions, the details of individual experience being followed and represented with supreme care, each new mark or indication, however slight, like an acid biting inward, in wavering lines, slowly intensifying the first feeling awakened in the imagination. This is the secret of the success of "Robinson Crusoe," and more especially of the effect on the mind of that incident of the footprint in the sand. But Mr. Gilbert really works inward, where Defoe would work outward. Defoe imaginatively and dramatically suggests, and then works in separate details to confirm the suggestion; while Mr. Gilbert is the poet of psychology, and the transformer of exceptional moods and conditions into moral symbols, scarce ever awakening sug-

gestions in the imagination save through the relation and ultimate synthesis of his manifold detail. Defoe has a better chance of seizing the common sympathy; Gilbert will take a deeper hold of the student, Sometimes it requires not a little knowledge of exceptional moods in themselves to enable one to follow interestedly the current of inner meaning over the long gray bridge of seemingly arbitrarily assorted facts, till, looking back, the moral meaning flashes on the intellect at the end. And it is very surprising, that the critics' constantly comparing Mr. Gilbert with Defoe has had the effect of confirming him in the very points wherein he essentially differs from him,—chiefly in the tendency to heap up separate facts and details which receive no unifying light or colouring from the imagination till the interest of the common reader has become weakened, if it has not entirely flagged. The "Confessions" of the Magician, the Innominato, at the end of this new work, "The Wizard of the Mountain," is a typical specimen of this tendency. Mr. Gilbert is a moralist of a very peculiar order. He sees all the common elements of life reflected through prisms that distort and intermingle, and yet each part is preserved as a true representation; it is only the combination that is abnormal and strange, sometimes weird, and on it he hangs the rarest moral teachings, which never completely overbear the psychologic or semi-scientific interest. This is seen very clearly in "Tomaso and Pepina," and in "Don Bucephalo," and it is also the secret of the interest we feel in his mad people, both in "Shirley Hall" and "Dr. Austin's Guests." Had they really been genuine mad people, the books had both been oppressive. His skill is setting up one faculty against another—cutting several individualities in two, uniting the several portions, and then making the odd creations skirmish through one another, is truly a most remarkable one—unique, so far as we know, in literature, and well worthy of most careful study. Mr. Gilbert's power is weird and fascinating, but somewhat limited by its appeal to special classes; and the interest he awakens is scarcely commensurate either with his peculiarly original powers or his painstaking and most conscientious work. He ought in this respect to be the most popular author of the day. He can even project half his mind into another half of a condemned criminal's, and give us a mental record of the criminal's last four minutes with all the slow, dry detail of an unimpassioned third party. "The Wizard of the Mountain" contains a number of stories excellently told, and with a dry crisp sort of humour, here and there disturbed and relieved by a ripple of pathos. Like Montillado, they leave a peculiar flavour on the palate. The moral teaching is of the purest and loftiest kind, and some of the stories, as, for instance, "Dr. Onofrio" and the "Magic Flower," possess powerful interest apart from the moral which runs clearly through them, yet which needs a little searching for. The grouping and arrangement of the book are admirable, and no one will regret making the Innominato's acquaintance and finding out how he came to possess such supernatural powers, and

how his falseness to duty and to truth for the sake of knowledge and of power avenged itself upon both his spiritual and physical being. Some of the stories in the book will delight the run of readers merely as successful stories.

Miss Hesba Stretton, like Mr. Gilbert, has surprising power of analysis, but it lies in quite a different direction. She occupies herself with the action of distinct characters thrown into kindred circumstances calculated to develop morbid and exceptional frames of mind, and she shows great skill in maintaining clear lines of character amid all the tortuosity of these strange involvements of circumstance. Before she can be really successful in a three-volume novel, she must write a quiet story of real life, moving on healthfully upon ordinary levels; morbid and exceptional excitements from without being used sparingly, and only in the way of relief and shading. The backbone of plot in "Paul's Courtship," for instance, is tainted just a little, and not only that, but taints slightly the characters running nearest it, exactly as in some meat we occasionally get at second-class eating-houses. The idea of an ambitious, scheming woman forming the notion of securing her aim by exciting her two brothers to a double and aimless sacrifice, is original, and it is here wrought out with great subtlety. Poor Paul Lockley, who buries himself in his books because his cousin has supplanted him in the affection of his first love, and whose hand hovers towards the volume as Mrs. Margraf begins her suggestions as to the state of clever Doris' heart, is inimitably pourtrayed, and so is Atcherley, the deformed artist. But the best and most natural conception in the work is the poetic Mrs. Aspen, who, after many trials, is lifted into the position she deserves and desires; and whatever defects may accrue to the work as art from the author's peculiar mental tendency, the outstanding lesson is powerfully brought out, that scheming, even for others, when it ignores the peculiar inward needs of those concerned, can only by slow degrees defeat itself.

"The Savage Club Papers for 1868" is in some respects superior to its predecessor. Its object would disarm criticism, were it not that Mr. Halliday repudiates such a notion. But the volume may well stand on its own merit. Mr. Godfrey Turner, Mr. Halliday, and the pseudo Mr. de Jones, are very happy. Yet though the matter of the volume is sufficiently well varied, the sameness of style is remarkable. The *Saturday Review* is unique in this respect, but other forms of intimate association seem to produce a little of the same result. There is a sharpness occasionally almost amounting to abruptness, betraying a sort of corporate consciousness rather than self-consciousness; and that calm roundedness of delicate reserve which we find in our best classics vanishes before a determination after mere verbal play, keenness, and separate points. But the volume is so beautiful and replete with interest that we cordially recommend it.



"Have you forgotten me, Madame de Mellissie? I am Anne Hereford."

THE ARGOSY.

MARCH 2, 1868.

ANNE HEREFORD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE."

CHAPTER VII.

EMILY CHANDOS.

THE temptation to tell of my school life at Miss Fenton's is very great, for it had its interests; but these pages do not afford sufficient space. Of my school life in France that succeeded, I have something to say of necessity.

In the gray dawn of an August morning, I stood on a steamer that was about to clear out from alongside one of the wharves near London Bridge. It was bound for a seaport town in France. Scarcely dawn yet, the night-clouds still hung upon the earth, but light was breaking in the eastern horizon. The passengers were coming on board—not many; it did not appear that the boat would have much of a freight that day. I heard one of the seamen say so; I knew nothing about it; and the scene was as new to me as the world is to a bird, flying, for the first time, from a cage where it has been hatched and reared.

I was fifteen, and had left Miss Fenton's for good; thoroughly well-educated, so far. And now they were sending me to a school in France to finish.

I will not say precisely where this school was situated; there are reasons against it; but what little record I give of the establishment shall be true and faithful. It was not at Boulogne, or at Calais, those renowned seaports, inundated with Anglo-French schools; neither was it in Paris or Brussels. We can call the town Nulle, and that's near enough. It was kept by two ladies, sisters, the Demoiselles Barlieu. The negotiations had been made by my trustees, and Mrs. Hemson had brought me to London, down to the steamer on this early morning, and was now consigning me to the care of Miss Barlieu's English governess,

whom we had there met by appointment. She was a Miss Johnstone, a very plain person, looking too young to maintain much authority, and dressed in gray alpaca. Authority, however, I found she would have little in the school; she was engaged to teach English, and there her duties ended.

"You had better secure a berth, and lie down," she said to me. "The night has been cold, and it is scarcely light enough yet to be on deck."

"Any ladies for shore?" cried a rough voice at the cabin door.

"Shore!" echoed Miss Johnstone, in what seemed alarm. "You are surely not going to start yet! I am waiting for another young lady."

"It won't be more than five minutes now, mum."

"A pupil?" I asked her.

"I believe so. Mademoiselle Barlieu wrote to me that two—"

"Any lady here of the name of Johnstone?"

The inquiry came from a middle-aged, quiet-looking person, who was glancing in at the cabin door. By her side stood a most elegant girl of seventeen, perhaps eighteen, her eyes dark blue, her face brilliantly fair, her dress handsome.

"I am Miss Johnstone," said the teacher, advancing.

"What a relief! The steward thought no governess had come on board, and I must not have dared to send Miss Chandos alone. My lady—"

"You would, Hill; so don't talk nonsense," interrupted the young lady, with a laugh, as she threw up her white veil, and brought her beauty right underneath the cabin lamp. "Would the fishes have swallowed me up any the quicker for not being in somebody's charge? Unfasten my cloak, Hill."

"This young lady is Miss Chandos, ma'am," said the person addressed as "Hill," presenting the beautiful girl to Miss Johnstone. "Please take every care of her in going across."

The young lady wheeled round. "Are you our new English teacher?"

"I am engaged as English governess at Mademoiselle Barlieu's," replied Miss Johnstone. "She wrote word to me that I might expect Miss Chandos and Miss Hereford on board."

"Miss Hereford!" was the quick response. "Who is she?"

But by that time I was lying down on the berth, and the rough voice again interrupted.

"Any lady as is for shore had better look sharp, unless they'd like to be took off to t'other side the Channel."

"What fun, Hill, if they should take off you!" laughed Miss Chandos, as the former started up with trepidation. "Now don't stumble overboard in your haste to get off the boat."

"Good-bye to you, Miss Emily, and a pleasant journey! You won't fail to write as soon as you arrive: my lady will be anxious."

"Oh, I will gladden mamma's heart with a letter, or she may be

thinking the bottom of the steamer has come out," lightly returned Miss Chandos. "Mind, Hill, that you give my love to Mr. Harry when he gets home."

Those who were for shore went on shore, and soon we were in all the bustle and noise of departure. Miss Chandos stood by the small round table, looking in the hanging-glass, and turning her shining golden ringlets round her fingers. On one of those fingers was a ring, whose fine large stones formed a hearts-ease: two were topaz, the other three dark amethyst: the whole beautiful.

"May I suggest that you should lie down, Miss Chandos?" said our governess for the time being. "You will find the benefit of doing so."

"Have you crossed the Channel many times?" was the reply of Miss Chandos, as she coolly proceeded with her hair: and her tone to Miss Johnstone was a patronizing one.

"Only twice; to France and home again."

"And I have crossed it a dozen times at least, between school and Continental voyages with mamma, so you cannot teach me much in that respect. I can assure you there's nothing more disagreeable than to be stewed in one of these suffocating berths. When we leave the river, should it prove a rough sea, well and good; but I don't put myself in a berth until then."

"Have you been long with the Miss Barlieus?" inquired Miss Johnstone.

"Two dismal years. But I have outlived the dismality now—if you will allow me to coin a word. Mamma has known the Barlieus all her life: an aunt of theirs was her governess when she was young: and when we were returning home from Italy, she went to the place and left me there, instead of taking me on to England. Was I not rebellious over it! for three months I planned, every day, to run away on the next."

"But you did not?" I spoke up from my berth, greatly interested.

Miss Chandos turned round and looked at me.

"No," she laughed, "it was never accomplished. I believe the chief impediment was, the not knowing where to run to. Are you the Miss Hereford?"

"Yes."

"What a bit of a child you seem! You won't like a French school, if this is your first entrance to one. Home comforts and French schools are as far apart as the two poles."

"But I am not accustomed to home comforts; I have no home. I have been for some years at an English school where there was little comfort of any sort. Do your friends live in England? Have you a home there?"

"A home in England!" she answered, with some surprise at the

question, or at my ignorance. "Of course: I am Miss Chandos. Chandos is mamma's present residence; though, strictly speaking, it belongs to Sir Thomas."

All this was so much Greek to me. Perhaps Miss Chandos saw that it was, for she laughed gaily.

"Sir Thomas Chandos is my brother. Harry is the other one. We thought Tom would have retired from the army and come home when papa died, two or three years ago; but he still remains in India. Mamma writes him word that he should come home and marry, and so make himself into a respectable man; he sends word back that he is respectable enough as it is."

"Your papa was—?"

"Sir Thomas Chandos. Ah, dear! if he had but lived! He was so kind to us! Mamma is in widow's weeds yet, and always will be."

"And who was she who brought you on board?"

"Hill. She is the housekeeper at Chandos. Some one has always taken me over until this time, generally Harry. But Harry is away, and Miss Barlieu wrote word to mamma that the English governess could bring me, so Hill was despatched with me to town."

We had a rough passage: of which I cannot think to this day without—without wishing not to think of it; and late in the afternoon the steamer was made fast to the port it was bound for. In the midst of the bustle preparatory to landing, a gentleman, young, vain, and good-looking, leaped on board, braving the douaniers, who were too late to prevent him, and warmly greeted Miss Chandos.

"My dear Emily!"

"Speak in French, Alfred," she said, taking the initiative and addressing him in the language—her damask cheeks, her dimples, and her dancing eyes all being something lovely to behold. "I have not come alone, as I thought I should. A duenna, in the shape of the English governess, has charge of me."

"Miss Chandos, the men are calling out that we must land."

"The interruption came from Miss Johnstone, who had approached, looking keenly at the gentleman. The latter, with scant courtesy to the governess, made no reply, but assisted Miss Chandos up the landing-steps. Miss Chandos turned her head when she reached the top.

"Be so good as to look in the cabin, Miss Johnstone; I have left a hundred things there, odds and ends. My warm cloak is somewhere."

Miss Johnstone appeared anything but pleased. It is not usual for pupils to order their teachers to look after their things; and Miss Chandos was of somewhat imperious manner: not purposely: it was her nature. I turned with Miss Johnstone, and we collected together the items left by Miss Chandos. By the time we got to the custom-house, she had disappeared. Twenty minutes after, when we and our luggage

had been examined, we found her outside, walking to and fro with the gentleman.

"Where are your boxes, Miss Chandos?" asked Miss Johnstone.

"My boxes? I don't know anything about them. I gave my keys to one of the commissionaires, and he will see to them. Or you can, if you like."

"I do not imagine that it is my business to do so," was Miss Johnstone's offended reply. But Miss Chandos was again occupied with her companion, and paid no heed to her.

"Halloa, De Mellissie! have you been to England?" inquired an English gentleman who was passing of Miss Chandos's friend.

"Not I," he replied. "I stepped on board the boat when it came in, so they took their revenge by making me go through the custom-house and turning my pockets inside out. Much good it did them!"

An omnibus was waiting round the corner, in which we were finally to be conveyed to our destination, Mademoiselle Barlieu's. Seated in it was a little, stout, good-tempered dame of fifty, Mademoiselle Caroline, the senior teacher. She received Miss Chandos with open arms and a kiss on each cheek. The gentleman politely handed us by turn into the omnibus, and stood bowing to us, bareheaded, as we drove away.

"Do you think him handsome?" Miss Chandos whispered to me, the glow on her face fading.

"Pretty well. What is his name?"

"Alfred de Mellissie. You can be good-natured, can't you?" she added.

"I can, if I like."

"Then be so now, and don't preach it out to the whole school that he met me. He—"

"Is that gentleman a relative of yours, Miss Chandos?" interrupted Miss Johnstone from the end of the omnibus.

Miss Chandos did not like the tone or the question: the one savoured of acrimony, the other she resented as impertinent. She fixed her haughty blue eyes on Miss Johnstone before she answered: they said very plainly, "By what right do you presume to inquire of me?" and Miss Johnstone bit her lips at the look.

"They are not related to us. Madame de Mellissie is an intimate friend of my mother, Lady Chandos." And that was all she condescended to say, for she turned her back and began laughing and chattering in French with Mademoiselle Caroline.

The Miss Barlieus received us graciously, giving us all the same friendly greeting that the old teacher had given only to Miss Chandos. Two pleasant, kind-hearted maiden ladies were they, not very young. Miss Annette confessed to having passed thirty-five. We were their visitors that evening, and were regaled with nice things in their own parlour.

In assorting her clothes after unpacking the next day, Miss Chandos missed a new velvet mantle. Some commotion ensued, and she was told she ought to have been more careful : it must have been lost at the custom-house. Miss Chandos took the loss equably, as she appeared to do most things. "Oh, if it's lost, mamma must send me over another," was her careless comment.

Mademoiselle Annette came into the school in the afternoon, and accosted Miss Chandos.

"I understand, Miss Chandos, that you did not take any care of your boxes yourself at the custom-house ; merely gave up your keys ?"

A slight accession of colour, and Miss Chandos turned round her fair bright face, acknowledging that it was so.

"But, my dear, that was evincing great carelessness."

"I don't see it, Mademoiselle Annette," was Miss Chandos's smiling dissent. "What are the commissionaires for, but to take charge of keys, and examine baggage ?"

"Well, they have been up from the customs to say that the mantle was not left there. The commissionaire himself is here now ; he says everything taken out of your boxes was safely put in again."

"It was a beautiful mantle, Mademoiselle Annette, and I dare say somebody caught it up and ran away with it when the man's attention was turned the other way. It can't be helped : there are worse misfortunes at sea."

"What gentleman was it that you were walking about with ?" resumed Mademoiselle Annette.

"Gentleman?" returned Miss Chandos, in a questioning tone, as if she could not understand, or did not remember. "Gentleman, Mademoiselle Annette ?"

"A gentleman who came on board to speak to you ; and who assisted you to land ; and with whom you were walking about afterwards, while the other ladies were in the custom-house ?"

"Oh, I recollect ; yes. There was a gentleman who came on board : it was Monsieur de Mellissie." Very brilliant had Miss Chandos's cheeks become ; but she turned her face to the desk as if anxious to continue her studies, and Mademoiselle Barlieu saw it not.

"What took him on board ?" resumed Mademoiselle Annette.

"As if I knew, Mademoiselle Annette !" lightly replied the young lady. "He may have wanted to speak to the captain—or to some of the sailors. He did not tell me."

"But you were promenading with him afterwards !"

"And very polite of him it was, to give up his time to promenade with me, while I was waiting for them to come out," replied Miss Chandos. "I returned him my thanks for it, Mademoiselle Annette. I the new English teacher had had a thousand boxes to clear, she could not have been much longer over it. I thought she was never coming."

"Well, my dear, do not promenade with Monsieur de Mellissie. It is not the right thing for a young lady to do ; and Miladi Chandos might not be pleased that you should."

"On the contrary, Mademoiselle Annette, mamma charged me with twenty messages to give him, in trust for his mother," replied the undaunted girl. "I was glad of an opportunity of delivering them."

Mademoiselle Annette said no more. She charged the girls as she quitted the room to get ready their geography books, for she should return for that class in five minutes."

"I say, Emily Chandos, whatever is all that about?" asked a young lady.

"I don't care ! It's that new English teacher who has been reporting ! Alfred jumped on board as soon as we touched the side, and I stayed with him until the omnibus was ready—or until we were ready for the omnibus. Where was the harm ? *You* did not tell, Anne Hereford?"

"I have not spoken of it to any one."

"No ; I was sure of that : it's that precious teacher. I did not like her before, but for this I'll give her all the trouble I can at my English lessons."

The next morning Miss Chandos had a letter from home. Lady Chandos had discovered that the velvet mantle, by some unaccountable mischance, had not been put into the boxes. She would forward it after her.

I wish I had space to continue the narration of events as they occurred. From that first early time there was war to the knife between the English governess and Miss Chandos. But whereas Miss Chandos, at the worst, was but actuated by a good-humoured spirit of mischief, Miss Johnstone had learnt to hate the favoured and brilliant school-girl.

The De Mellissies were staying in the town. Madame de Mellissie, an English lady by birth, had been intimate with Lady Chandos in early life : they were good friends still. Her son, Monsieur Alfred de Mellissie, chief of the family now in place of his dead father, appeared to make it the whole business of his life to admire Emily Chandos. The school commented on it.

"It can never lead to anything," they said. "He is only a Frenchman of *comme-ça* family, and she is Miss Chandos of Chandos."

And—being Miss Chandos of Chandos—it occurred to me to wonder that she should be at that French school. Not but that it was superior—one of the first to be found in France ; but scarcely the place for Miss Chandos.

I said as much—talking one day with Mademoiselle Annette.

"My dear, Emily Chandos, though one of the most charming and loveable girls ever seen, is inclined to be wild ; and Miladi Chandos thinks the discipline of a school good for her. They do not care to have a governess residing at Chandos."

"But why, mademoiselle?"

Mademoiselle Annette shook her head mysteriously. "I know not. Miladi said it to me. She is altered terribly. There is always a cloud hanging over Chandos. Go on with your drawing, my dear: young ladies should not be curious."

The weeks and the weeks went on. Emily Chandos, by permission from home, went out visiting perpetually. Miss Johnstone brought back tales that M. Alfred de Mellissie attended her much. It gave rise to commotion in the school, to rebellion from Emily, and to a step that could never be recalled. Emily Chandos quitted the house to become the wife of Alfred de Mellissie, having been aided and assisted therein (so gossip whispered) by his English mother. A telegraphic despatch went over to Chandos House, and Mademoiselle Barlieu took to her bed with chagrin.

The despatch brought back Mr. Chandos, Emily's brother. Mademoiselle Annette saw him in the drawing-room. She talked loud and fast, and her eyes were streaming with grief.

"It all comes of that indiscriminate visiting, sir, that was allowed to Mademoiselle Chandos," she said, with bitter tears. "I told my sister ten times that Miladi Chandos was wrong to permit it. Ah! sir, we shall not ever get over the blow."

"Do not distress yourself," Mr. Chandos answered. "I can see that no shadow of blame rests with you. That lies with Emily and Madame de Mellissie: my sister's fortune is a great prize to a Frenchman."

What made me gather myself into a nook of wall, and gaze upon Mr. Chandos, as he was passing out in the dusk of the evening? Not the deep, mellow tones—not the sweet accent of voice in which his words were spoken. That they were all that, my ear told me; but something else had struck upon me—his face and form. Where had I seen him?

Somewhere, I felt certain. The contour of the pale face, with its fine and delicate features—something in the tall, slim figure, even in the manner of turning his head as he spoke, all touched a chord of my memory. Where—where could I have seen Mr. Chandos?"

The question was not solved; and time went steadily on again.

CHAPTER VIII.

AT MRS. PALER'S.

NINETEEN years of age—nineteen! For the last twelvemonth, since the completion of my education, I had helped in the school as one of the governesses. The Miss Barlieus, whose connection was extensive amidst the English as well as the French, had undertaken the responsibility of "placing me out," as my trustees phrased it. But an illness

with which I was attacked—not a severe one, but lasting some time—caused the Miss Barlieus to be in no hurry, and they kept me on: they liked me, and I liked them.

So I was to be a governess after all! The last descendant of the Herefords and the Keppe-Carews had no home in the world, and must work for one. My pride rebelled against it now, as it never had when I was a child, and I made a resolution never to talk about my family. I was an orphan. I had no relatives living: that would be quite enough answer when asked about it.

I had never heard a syllable of Mr. Edwin Barley since I left him, or of any of his household, or of the events that had taken place there. That George Heneage had never been traced, I knew; that Mr. Edwin Barley was still seeking after him, I was quite sure: the lapse of years could not abate the anger of a man like him. Mrs. Hemson was dead now, a twelvemonth past; so that I was entirely alone in the world. As to the will, it had, of course, never been found, or the money would have been mine. My growth in years, the passing from the little girl into the woman, and the new ties and interests of my foreign school life, had in a degree obliterated those unhappy events, and I scarcely ever gave even a thought to the past.

Mr. and Mrs. Paler were staying temporarily at Nulle; well-connected English people, about to fix their residence in Paris. They were strangers to me personally, but we heard that Mrs. Paler was inquiring for a governess; one who spoke thoroughly English, French, and German. Mademoiselle Annette thought it might suit me, and proposed to take me to call on them at the Lion d'Or hotel.

I seized upon the idea eagerly. The word Paris had wrought its own charm. To be conveyed to that city of delight, appeared only secondary to entering within the precincts of a modern Elysium.

"Oh, Mademoiselle Annette, do let us go! I might perhaps do for them."

Mademoiselle Annette laughed at the eagerness so unequivocally betrayed. But she set off with me the same day.

The Lion d'Or was full. Mr. and Mrs. Paler had no private sitting-room (there were only two salons in the whole house), and we were ushered into their chamber, French fashion. Mr. Paler was a stout man in gold spectacles, shy and silent; his wife, a tall handsome woman with large eyes and dark hair, talked enough for both. Some conversation ensued, chiefly taken up by Mrs. Paler's explaining the sort of governess she wished for. Mr. Paler quitted us.

"If you require a completely well-educated young lady—a gentleman in every sense of the term—you cannot do better than engage Miss Hereford," said Mademoiselle Annette.

"But what's her religion?" abruptly asked Mrs. Paler. "I would not admit a Roman Catholic into the bosom of my family; no, not though

she paid me to come. Designing Jesuits, as a great many of them are !”

Which, considering she was speaking to a Roman Catholic, and that a moment's consideration might have told her she was, evinced anything but courtesy on the lady's part, to say nothing of good feeling. Mademoiselle Annette's brown cheek deepened, and so did mine.

“I belong to the Church of England, madam,” I answered.

“And with regard to singing?” resumed Mrs. Paler, passing to another qualification unceremoniously. “Have you a fine voice?—a good style?—can you teach it well?”

“I do not sing. Neither am I a very brilliant player. I have no great forte for music. What I do play I play well, and I can teach it well.”

“There it is! Was there ever anything so tiresome?” grumbled Mrs. Paler. “I declare you cannot have everything, try as you will. Our last governess was first-rate in music—quite a divine voice she had—and her style perfect; but, of all the barbarous accents in French and German (not to speak of her wretched grammar), hers were the worst. Now you are a good linguist, but no hand at music! What a worry it is!”

“May I ask what age your children are?” interposed Mademoiselle Annette, who could speak sufficient English to understand and join in the conversation.

“The eldest is twelve.”

“Then I can assure you Miss Hereford is quite sufficient musician for what you will want at present, madam. It is not always the most brilliant players who are the best instructors; our experience has taught us that the contrary is the case.”

Mrs. Paler mused.

“Does Miss Hereford draw?”

“Excellently well,” replied Mademoiselle Annette.

“I have a great mind to try her,” debated Mrs. Paler, as if soliloquizing with herself. “But I must just pay my husband the compliment of asking what he thinks: though I never allow any opinion of his to influence me. He is the shyest man! he went out, you saw, as you came in.”

“When you have considered the matter, madam, we shall be glad to receive your answer,” observed Mademoiselle Annette, as she rose. And Mrs. Paler acquiesced.

“Anne,” began Mademoiselle Annette, as we walked home, “I do not think that situation will suit you. You will not be comfortable in it.”

“But why?” I asked, feeling my golden visions of Paris dimmed by the words. “I think it would perfectly suit me, mademoiselle.”

“Madame Paler is not a nice lady; she is not a gentlewoman. I question, too, if she would make you comfortable.”

"I am willing to risk it. You and Mademoiselle Barlieu have told me all along that I cannot expect everything."

"That is true, my child. Go where you will, you must look out for disagreeables and crosses. The lives of all of us are made up of trials; none, save ourselves, can feel them; few, save ourselves, can see, or will believe in them. Many a governess, tossed and turned about in the world's tempest, weary of her daily task, sick of its monotony, is tempted, no doubt, to say, 'Oh, that I were established as the Demoiselles Barlieu are, with a home and school of my own!' But I can tell you, Anne, that often and often I and my sister envy the lot of the poorest governess out on her own account, because she is free from anxiety."

She spoke truly. Every individual lot has its peculiar trials, and none can mitigate them. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness." I walked on by her side then, in my young inexperience, wondering whether *all* people had these trials, whether they would come to me. It was my morning of life, when the unseen future looks as a bright and flowery dream. Mademoiselle Annette broke the silence.

"You will never forget, my dear, that you have a friend in us. Should you meet with any trouble, should you be at any time out of a situation, come to us; our house is open to you."

"Thank you, thank you, dear Mademoiselle Annette," I replied, grasping her hand. "I will try and do brave battle with the world's cares; I have not forgotten my mother's lessons."

"Anne," she gravely responded, "do not *battle*: rather welcome them."

Well, I was engaged. And, as the Demoiselles Barlieu observed, it was not altogether like my entering the house of people entirely strange, for they were acquainted with the family of Mr. Paler: himself they had never before seen, but two of his sisters had been educated in their establishment.

A week or two after the Palers had settled themselves in Paris, I was escorted thither by a friend of the Miss Barlieus. The address given me was Avenue de St. Cloud, Commune de Passy. We found it a good-looking, commodious house, and my travelling protector, Madame Barnadotte, left me at the door. A young girl came forward as I was shown into a room.

"Are you Miss Hereford, the new governess?"

"Yes. I think I have had the pleasure of seeing you at Nulle," I answered, holding out my hand to her.

"That I'm sure you've not. I never was at Nulle. It was Kate and Harriet who went there with papa and mamma. I and Fanny and Grace came straight here last week from England, with nurse."

Now, strange to say, it had never occurred to me or to the Miss Barlieus to ask Mrs. Paler, during the negotiations, how many pupils I

should have. Two children were with them at Nulle, Kate and Harriet, and I never supposed that there were others; I believed these would be my only pupils.

"How many are you, my dear?"

"Oh, we are five."

"Am I to teach you all?"

"Of course. There's nobody else to teach us. And we have two little brothers, but they are quite in the nursery."

Had Mrs. Paler purposely concealed the number? or had it been the result of inadvertence? The thought that came over me was, that were I engaging a governess for five pupils, I should take care to mention that there were five. They came flocking round me now, every one of them, high-spirited, romping girls, difficult of control, their ages varying from six to twelve.

"Mamma and papa are out, but I don't suppose they'll be long. Do you want to see mamma?"

"I shall be glad to see her."

"Do you wish for anything to eat?" inquired Miss Paler. "You can have what you like: dinner or tea; you have only to ring and order it. We have dined, and had tea also. Mamma has not; but you don't take your meals with her."

As she spoke, some noise was heard in the house, and they all ran out. It proved to be Mrs. Paler. She went up to her own sitting-room, and thither I was summoned.

"So you have got here safely, Miss Hereford?" was her salutation, spoken cordially enough. But she did not offer to shake hands with me.

"I have been making acquaintance with my pupils, madam. I did not know there were so many."

"Did you not? Oh, you forgot; I have no doubt I mentioned it."

"I think not. I believed that the two Miss Palers I saw at Nulle were your only children."

"My only children! Good gracious, Miss Hereford, what an idea! Why, I have seven! and have lost two, which made nine, and shall have more yet, for all I know. You will take the five girls; five are as easily taught as two."

I did not dispute the words. I had come, intending and hoping to do my duty to the very utmost extent, whether it might be much or little. Though certainly the five pupils did look formidable in prospective, considering that I should have to teach them everything, singing excepted.

"I hope you will suit me," went on Mrs. Paler. "I have had many qualms of doubt since I engaged you. But I can't beat them into Mr. Paler; he turns round, and politely tells me they are 'rubbish,' as any heathen might."

"Qualms of doubt as to my being but nineteen, or to my skill in music?" I asked.

"Neither; your age I never made an objection, and I dare say your music will do very well for the present. But never mind now; I dare say you will try and serve us conscientiously. Here's Mr. Paler."

He came in, the same apparently shy, silent, portly man as at Nulle, in his gold spectacles. But he came up kindly to me, and shook hands.

"Well, Miss Hereford, we are glad to see you. And what sort of weather have you had at Nulle since we left it?"

"Not very fine. Yesterday it poured with rain all day."

"Ah. That would make it pleasant for travelling, though."

"Yes: it laid the dust."

"Did you travel alone?"

"Oh, no; the Miss Barlieus would not have allowed it. It is not etiquette in France for a young lady to go out even for a walk alone. An acquaintance of the Miss Barlieus, Madame Bernadotte, who was journeying to Paris, accompanied me."

"Well, I hope you will be comfortable here," he concluded.

"Thank you; I hope so."

"And look here, I'll give you a hint. Just you get the upper hand of those children at once, or you'll never do it. They are like so many untrained colts."

Nothing more was said. I had not been asked to sit, and supposed the silence was a hint that I must quit the room. Before I had got far, a servant came and said I was to go back to it. Mrs. Paler was alone then, looking very solemn and dark.

"Miss Hereford, you have been reared in seclusion, mostly in school, and probably know little of the conveniences—the exactions of social life. Do not be offended if I set you right upon a point—I have no doubt you have erred, not from want of respect, but from lack of knowledge."

What had I done? Of course I said I should be obliged to her to set me right in anything when found wrong.

"You are a governess; you hold a dependent situation in my house. Is it not so?"

"Certainly it is," I answered, wondering much.

"Then never forget that a certain amount of respect in manner is due to myself and to Mr. Paler. I do not, of course, wish to exact the deference a servant would give—you must understand that; but there's a medium: a medium, Miss Hereford. To you, I and Mr. Paler are 'madam' and 'sir,' and I beg that we may be always addressed as such."

I curtsied and turned away, the burning colour dyeing my face. It was my first lesson in dependence. But Mrs. Paler was right; and I felt vexed to have forgotten that I was only a governess. Misplaced rebellion rose in my heart, whispering that I was a lady born; that my family was far higher in the social world than Mr. or Mrs. Paler's; whispering, moreover, that that lady was not a gentlewoman, and never could be one. But after a few minutes spent in sober reflection,

common sense chased away my foolish thoughts, leaving in place a firm resolution never so to transgress again. From that hour, I took up my position bravely—the yielding, dependent, poor governess.

But what a life of toil I entered upon! and—where were my dreams of Paris? Have you forgotten that they had visited me, in all their beautiful delusion? I had not. Delusive hopes are always the sweetest.

When I had stayed three months at Mrs. Paler's, I had never once been into Paris further than the Champs Elysées. Save that we went every Sunday morning in a closed carriage to the Ambassador's chapel, I saw nothing of Paris. The streets may have been of crystal, the fountains of malachite marble, the houses of burnished gold, for all I witnessed of them—and I believe my warm imagination had pictured something of the like splendence. There was no pleasure for me; no going out; my days were one lasting scene of toil.

I am not going to complain unjustly of Mrs. Paler's situation, or make it out worse than it was. It has become much the fashion of late years—I may say a mania—to set forth the sorrows and ill-treatment that governesses have to endure: were the other side of the question to be taken up, it might be seen that ladies have as much to bear from governesses. There are good places and there are bad ones; and there are admirable governesses, as well as undesirable and most incapable ones: perhaps the good and bad, on both sides, are about balanced. I was well-treated at Mr. Paler's; I had a generous diet, and a maid to wait upon me in conjunction with the two elder girls. When they had visitors in an evening, I was admitted on an equality (at any rate to appearance); I had respect paid me by the servants; and I was not found fault with by Mr. and Mrs. Paler. Could I desire better than this? No. But I was overworked.

Put it to yourselves what it was, if you have any experience in teaching. Five girls, all in different stages of advancement, to learn everything, from German and good English down to needlework. The worst task was the music; the drawing lessons I could give conjointly. All five learnt it, piano and harp, and two of them, the second and the youngest but one, were so wild and unsteady that they could not be trusted to practise one instant alone. I rose every morning at half-past six to begin the music lessons, and I was usually up until twelve or one o'clock the next morning correcting exercises, for I could not find time to do them during the day. "Make time," says somebody. I could only have made it by neglecting the children.

"Our last governess never did a thing after six in the evening," Kate said to me one day. "You should not be so particular, Miss Hereford."

"But she did not get you on to your mamma's satisfaction."

"No, indeed: mamma sent her away because of that. She did not care whether we advanced or not. All she cared for was to get the studies over anyhow."

Just so: it had been eye-service, as I could have told by their ignorance when I took the girls in hand. My dear mother had enjoined me differently: "Whatever you undertake, Anne, let it be done to the very best of your ability: do it as to God; as though His eye and ear were ever present with you."

I appealed to Mrs. Paler: telling her I could not continue to work as I was doing, and asking what could be done.

"Oh, nonsense, Miss Hereford, you must be a bad economiser of time," she answered. "The other governesses I have had did not complain of being overworked."

"But, madam, did they do their duty?"

"Middling for that—but then they were incorrigibly lazy. We are quite satisfied with you, Miss Hereford, and you must manage your time so as to afford yourself more leisure."

I suggested to Mrs. Paler that she should get help for part of the music lessons, but she would not hear of it; so I had to go on doing my best; but to do that best overtaxed my strength sadly. Mrs. Paler might have had more consideration: she saw that I rarely went out; one hurried walk in a week, perhaps, and the drive to church on Sunday. My pupils walked out every day, taken by one or other of the servants; but they did not go together: two or three stayed with me while the rest went, and when they came back to me these went. Mrs. Paler insisted upon my giving an hour of music to each child daily, which made five hours a day for music alone. The confinement and the hard work, perhaps the broken spirits, began to tell upon me, nervous headaches came on, and I wrote to the Miss Barlieus, asking what I should do. I wrote the letter on a Sunday, I am sorry to say, failing time on a week day. None of us went abroad on a Sunday afternoon. Mrs. Paler protested that nothing but sin and gallivanting was to be seen out of doors on a French Sunday; and, once home from church, we were shut up for the rest of the day. She did not go out herself, or suffer anybody else to go; Mr. Paler excepted—he took the reins in his own hands.

The Miss Barlieus answered me sensibly: it was Miss Annette who wrote. "Put up with it to the close of your year from the time of entrance," she said. "It is never well for a governess to leave her situation before the year is up, if it can be avoided; and, were you to do so, some ladies might urge it as an objection to making another engagement with you. You are but young still. Give Mrs. Paler ample notice, three months, we believe, is the English usage—and endeavour to part with her amicably. She must see that her situation is beyond your strength."

I took the advice, and in June gave Mrs. Paler warning to leave, having entered her house in September. She was angry, and affected to believe I would not go. I asked her respectfully to put herself in idea in my place, and candidly say whether or not the work was too

hard. She muttered something about "over-conscientiousness;" that I should get along better without it. Nothing more was said; nothing satisfactory decided, and the time went on again to the approach of September. I wondered how I must set about looking out for another asylum; I had no time to look out, no opportunity to go abroad. Mr. Paler was in England.

"Miss Hereford, mamma told me to say that we shall be expected in the drawing-room to-night; you, and I, and Harriet," observed Kate Paler to me one hot summer's day. "The Gordons are coming and the De Mellissies."

"What De Mellissies are those?" I inquired, the name striking upon my ear with a thrill of remembrance.

"What De Mellissies are those! why, the De Mellissies," returned Kate, girl-fashion. "She is young and very pretty; I saw her when I was out with mamma in the carriage the other day."

"Is she English or French?"

"English, I'll vow. No French tongue could speak English as she does."

"When you answer in that free, abrupt manner, Kate, you greatly displease me," I interposed. "It is most unladylike."

Kate laughed; said she was free-spoken by nature, and it was of no use trying to be otherwise. By habit, more than by nature, I told her, and I waited with impatience for the evening.

It was Emily. Gay-mannered, laughing, lovely as ever, she came into the saloon on her husband's arm, wearing a pink silk dress and wreath of roses. Alfred de Mellissie looked ill; at least, he was paler and thinner than in the old days at Nulle. She either did not or would not remember me; as the evening drew on, I felt sure that she did not, for she spoke cordially enough to me, though as to an utter stranger. It happened that we were quite alone once, in the recess of a window, and I interrupted what she was saying about a song.

"Have you quite forgotten me, Madame de Mellissie?"

"Forgotten you!" she returned, with a quick glance. "I never knew you, did I?"

"In the years gone by, when you were Miss Chandos. I am Anne Hereford."

A puzzled gaze at me, and then she hid her face in her hands, its penitent expression mixed with laughter. "Never say a word about that naughty time, if you love me! everybody says it should be buried five fathoms deep. I ought to have known you, though, for it is the same gentle face; the steady eyes, and the long eye-lashes, and the honest good sense and the sweet smile. But you have grown out of all knowledge. And so you are a governess, Miss Hereford!"

"Yes," I bravely avowed.

"You must come and see me. Alfred, here's an old schoolfellow of mine. I dare say you'll remember her."

M. de Mellissie came at the call, and was talking to me for the rest of the evening.

The following morning was an eventful one. I had quitted the school-room for a moment to read a letter in my own, just come by the early post. It was from Miss Barlieu. A very kind letter, telling me to go back to them while I looked out for a fresh situation, should I not get one before leaving Mrs. Paler. Suddenly the door opened, and Mrs. Paler came in without any ceremony of knocking, her face white, and an open letter in her hand. She looked scared, fierce; agitation impeding her free utterance.

"Here's news!" she brought out at length, her voice rising to a scream, "here's news to come upon me like a thunderbolt! Does he expect me to live through it?"

"Oh, Mrs. Paler, what has happened? You look ill and terrified. You have had bad tidings! Will you not tell them to me?"

"What else have I come for but to tell you?" she retorted, speaking in a tone that betrayed as much anger as distress. "I went to the study after you, and frightened the girls; they were for following me here, so I locked them in. I must tell some one, or my feelings will burst bounds; they always were of a demonstrative nature. Not like *his*, the sly, quiet fox!"

My fears flew to Mr. Paler. He had been in England some time now, ever since the middle of May. Though I did not understand her anger, or the last words.

"You have heard from Mr. Paler, madam!" I uttered. "Some harm has happened to him!"

"Harm! yes, it has. Harm to me and my children, though, more than to him. Miss Hereford, he has just gone and ruined himself."

"How?" I asked, feeling grieved and puzzled.

"It was always his mania, that turf-gambling, and as a young man he got out of thousands at it. I thought how it would be—I declare I did—when he became restless here in Paris, just before the Epsom Meeting, and at last went off to it. 'You'll drop some hundreds over it, if you do go,' I said to him. 'Not I,' was his retort, 'since I have had children to drop hundreds over, I don't spare them for racehorses.' A wicked, reckless man!"

"And has he—dropped the hundreds, madam?"

"Hundreds!" she shrieked; and then, looking covertly around the room, as if fearful others might be listening, she sunk her voice to a whisper: "He has lost thirty thousand pounds."

"Oh!" I exclaimed, in my horror. Mrs. Paler wrung her hands.

"Thirty thousand pounds, every pound of it—and I hope remorse will haunt him to his dying day! Epsom, Ascot, Goodwood—I know not how many other courses he has visited this summer, and has betted frantically at all. The mania was upon him again, and he could not

stop himself. He is lying ill now at Doncaster, at one of the inns there, and his brother writes ; he tells me they dare not conceal the facts any longer."

"Shall you not go over to him, madam?"

"I go over to him!" she retorted; "I would not go to him if he were dying. But that my children are his, I would never live with him again; I would never notice him: I would get a divorce, if practicable, but for their sakes. You look shocked, Miss Hereford; but you, an unmarried girl, cannot realize the blow in all its extent. Do you think a man has any *right* wilfully to bring disgrace and misery upon his wife and children?"

"Oh, madam—no!"

"It is my punishment come home to me," she wildly exclaimed. "They told me how it would be, sooner or later, if I persisted in marrying James Paler; but I would not listen to them. My mother and sisters will say it serves me right."

I heard the children squealing and kicking at the school-room door, and did not dare to go to them.

"It is next door to ruin," said Mrs. Paler; "it will take from us more than half our income; and present debt and embarrassment it must bring. Ah! see how some things—trifles—happen sometimes for the best! I thought it a great misfortune to lose you, but I am glad of it now, for I am sure I can no longer afford an expensive governess. Nor many servants, either. Oh, woe's me!"

I stood looking at her distress with great pity, feeling that Mr. Paler must be next kin to a madman. And yet I had liked him: he was most affectionate to his children, and solicitous for the comfort of his household. Mrs. Paler seemed to become suddenly awake to the uproar. She darted to the school-room, scolded one, boxed another, locked the door upon them again, and came back to me.

"I had better settle things with you at once, Miss Hereford. If I take it in my head, I may go off to my family in England at a minute's notice, there's no knowing. Your time here will expire in a fortnight?"

"Yes."

"I had intended to offer an increased salary, if you would stay on—but that's all out of the question now. I suppose you have no settled plans; no fresh situation to go to?"

"Madam, it has not been in my power to look out for one."

"True. Yet it is better that you should go. I don't know what may become of us in future: where we shall live, or what we shall do—perhaps go to some obscure place in Germany, or Scotland, or Wales, and economise: anywhere, that it's cheap. I wonder that such men, who deliberately bring ruin on their families, are permitted to live! But now we must try and find you another situation."

"Perhaps Madame de Mellissie may know of something, and I think she would interest herself for me, if I knew how to see her."

"You can go and see her," replied Mrs. Paler, "you can go to-day, and call upon her. My maid shall take you. Never mind the studies : I feel as if I should not care if the girls never learnt anything again—with this blow upon them."

I did not wait for a second permission : the thought that Emily de Mellissie might help me to a fresh situation had been floating in my mind all night. She was well-connected in England ; she was in the best society in Paris ; and she was good-natured.

I proceeded to the hotel (as it was called) of old Madame de Mellissie, for it was her house, and her son and daughter-in-law lived with her. Emily was at home, surrounded by morning callers, quite a crowd of them. She looked intensely surprised at seeing me ; was, or I fancied it, rather distant and haughty in manner ; and, pointing to a chair, desired me to wait. Did she deem I had presumptuously intruded *as* one of those morning callers ? Very humbly I waited until the last had gone : schooling myself to remember that I was but a poor governess, while she was Madame Alfred de Mellissie, *née* Miss Chandos, of Chandos !

"And so you have soon come to pay me a visit, Miss Hereford !"

"I have come as a petitioner, rather than as a visitor, Madame de Mellissie. Can you spare me five minutes ?"

"I can spare you ten if you like, now those loungers are gone."

I forthwith told my tale. That I was leaving Mrs. Paler's, where I was overworked : that I had thought it possible she might know of some situation open : if so, would she kindly recommend me ?

"The idea, Anne Hereford, of your coming to me upon such an errand !" was her laughing answer. "As if I troubled myself about vacant situations ! There is a rumour current in Paris this morning that James Paler has been idiot enough to go and ruin himself on the turf. That he has lost a great deal of money is certain, for the newspapers allude to it in a manner not to be mistaken. Thank goodness, Alfred has no weakness that way, though he is empty-headed enough. Is it not a dreadful life, that of a governess ?"

"At Mrs. Paler's it has been one of incessant toil. I hope to go where the duties will be lighter. It is not the life I like, or would have chosen ; but I must bend to circumstances."

"That's true enough. I will ask all my friends in Paris if they—by the way," she abruptly broke off, speaking with slow deliberation, "I wonder whether — if you should be found suitable — whether you would like something else ?"

I made no reply ; only waited for her to explain herself.

"The case is this, Miss Hereford," she resumed, assuming a light manner. "I thought of going to Chandos on a visit ; my husband was

to have conducted me thither, but Madame de Mellissie has been ailing, and Alfred says it would not do to leave her. This morning we had a dispute over it. There's nothing much the matter with her ; were she in danger, it would be a different matter, but it's quite unreasonable to keep me away from Chandos for nothing but this. Monsieur Alfred grew vexed, said he should not quit her, and moreover did not, himself, feel well enough to travel,—for he has a sort of French fever hanging over him. They are always getting it, you know. I am sick of hearing one say to another, 'J'ai la fièvre aujourd'hui !' Then I said I should go without him : 'With great pleasure,' he complacently replied, provided I would engage a lady as companion, but he should not trust me alone. Complimentary to my discretion, was it not ?"

I could not deny it—in a certain sense.

"But the bargain was made ; it was indeed. I am to look out for a companion, and then I may be off the next hour to England, destination Chandos. Would you like to take the place ?"

A thousand thoughts flew over me at the abrupt question, crowding my mind, dyeing my cheeks. The prospect, at the first glance, appeared like a haven of rest after Mrs. Paler's. But—what would be my duties ?—and was I, a comparative child, fit for the post ? Should I be deemed fit by Monsieur de Mellissie ?

"What should I have to do ?" I asked.

"What I please," she answered. "You must amuse me when I am tired, read to me when I feel inclined to listen, play to me when I wish, be ready to go out when I want you, give orders to my maid for me, write my letters when I am too idle to do it, and post yourself at my side to play propriety between this and Chandos. Those are the onerous duties of a dame de compagnie, are they not ? but I have no experience in the matter. Could you undertake them ?"

She spoke all this curiously, in a haughty tone, but with a smile on her face. I did not know how to take it. "Are you speaking seriously, Madame de Mellissie ?"

"Of course I am. Stay, though. About the payment ? I could not afford to give much, for my purse has a hole at both ends of it, and I am dreadfully poor. I suppose you have had a high salary at Mrs. Paler's ?"

"Sixty guineas."

"Oh, don't talk of it !" she exclaimed, stopping her ears. "I wish I could give it ; but I never could squeeze out more than twenty. Anne, I will make a bargain with you : go with me to Chandos, stay with me during my visit there ; it will not last above a week or two ; and when we return here, I will get you a more lucrative situation. For the time you are with me, I will give you what I can afford, and of course pay your travelling expenses !"

With the word "Anne," she had gone back to the old familiar manner of our school-days. I accepted the offer willingly, subject, of course,

to the approval of Monsieur de Mellissie ; and very doubtful in my mind whether it would be carried out. As to the payment—what she said seemed reasonable enough, and money wore but little value in my eyes : I had not then found out its uses. Provided I had enough for my ordinary wants, it was all I cared for ; and a large sum was due to me from Mrs. Paler.

Somewhat to my surprise, M. de Mellissie approved of me as his wife's companion, paying me a compliment on the occasion. "You are young, Mademoiselle Hereford, but I can see you are one fully to be trusted : I confide my wife to you."

"I will do what I can, sir."

"You laugh at my saying that thing," he said, speaking in his sometimes rather odd English. "You think my wife can better take care of you, than you of her."

"I am younger than she is."

"That goes without telling, mademoiselle. You look it. The case is this," he added, in a confidential tone. "It is not that my wife wants protection on her journey ; she has her *femme de chambre* ; but because I do not think they would like to see her arrive alone at Chandos. My lady is difficile."

The permission to depart accorded, Madame de Mellissie was all impatience to set off. I bought a dress or two, but she would not allow me time to get them made, and I had to take them unmade. Though I was going to Chandos as a humble companion, I could not forget that my birth would have entitled me to go as a visitor, and wished to dress accordingly.

The foolish girl that I was ! I spent my money down to one Napoleon and some silver ; it was not very much I had by me ; and then Mrs. Paler, to my intense consternation, told me it was not convenient to pay me my salary.

She owed me thirty guineas. I had received the first thirty at the termination of the half-year : it was all spent, including what I had laid out now. I appealed to Mrs. Paler's good feeling, showing my needy state. In return, she appealed to mine.

"My dear Miss Hereford, I have not got it. Until remittances shall reach me from Mr. Paler, I am very short. You do not require money for your journey, Madame Alfred de Mellissie pays all that, and I will remit it to you ere you have been many days at Chandos. You will not, I am sure, object so far to oblige a poor distressed woman."

What answer could I give ?

On a lovely September morning we started for Boulogne-sur-Mer, Madame Alfred de Mellissie, I, and her maid Pauline. M. de Mellissie saw us off at the station. "I would have run down to Boulogne to put you on board the boat, but that I do not feel well enough ; my fever is very bad to-day," he said to me and his wife. She took no notice

of the words, but I saw they were true: his pale, thin face had a hectic red upon it, his hand, meeting mine in the adieu, burnt me through my glove.

"Madame de Mellissie, your husband certainly has an attack of fever," I said, as the train started.

"Ah, yes, no doubt; the French, as I previously observed, are subject to it. But it never comes to anything."

(*To be continued.*)



A PARTING SONG.

BY DORA GREENWELL.

"Ti wydost beth dywed fy nghalon."

SWEET were the days we've spent together,
Sad must the hour of our parting be;
Through the broad meadows in summer weather,
Pleasant the path that is waiting for thee;
In the red west, where the sun is sinking,
Deep through the shadows lies my way;
And I must onwards with step unshrinking—
Thou knowest all that my heart would say.

What shall I give thee for farewell token?
How shall I speed thee, with love or with care?
Think of the words that we have spoken,
Take them for wishes, and count them for prayer;
Oh! be thou wise when life, caressing,
Would woo thee to linger, would win thee to stay;
Keep in thy soul its earliest blessing—
Thou knowest all that my heart would say.

Oft o'er my soul will a sudden yearning
Bring back the days we are leaving behind,
Bring me thy footstep, no longer returning,
Bring me thy greeting, so gay and so kind;
How shall I bless thee? No longer beside thee,
I can but love thee, and lose thee, and pray;
Yet will God love thee, and keep thee, and guide thee—
Thou knowest all that my heart would say!

GOLDSMITH AND LA BRUYÈRE.

IT may be said that there are not, and never were, in this world two nations lying in such proximity to each other, exercising so obvious an influence over each other's tone of thought, and so well acquainted with each other's literature, as England and France, the characteristics of whose humour are so opposite, and whose apprehension of wit so completely different. There may be a good deal of truth after all in the remark of Schlegel, that the French are unemotional; for unless we presume this, it is not easy to account for the absence of that pathos and geniality of sentiment, the presence of which in English wit constitutes its noblest charm. Yet it may not be that they are so unemotional as that they have been habitually educated to a certain witty disregard of those social and endearing ties—a devotion to which enters so deeply into the English character. Their romances, their dramas, are mainly supported by a backbone of humour, or rather fun, which, because it takes as a subject for derision those affections which are elsewhere cherished, wants by necessity the only element that could render that humour rich and good—i. e., pathos.

Wit and humour have both been defined a thousand times; and they yet both want a definition. Perhaps it is that they are undefinable. But this may safely be said, that we all pretty well know what elements are needful to enter into the composition of wit and humour, before they can be called so. Now, however much the French wit is to be applauded, if we examine the French humour we shall find it destitute of those several elements by which we are taught to discern humour. We shall find no pathos, for the reasons I have already given; we shall naturally find little sympathy, because the very tone of the humour suggested by the subject that provokes it repels sympathy. Wit, on the contrary, need not necessarily include these qualities. Certainly wit is always improved by sympathy; but wit can be good without sympathy. Hence, without at all saying that French wit is better than English, it is quite certain that English humour is better than French. And, indeed, it may be fairly questioned whether what is called humour amongst French authors be not, by the absence of those special qualities which could make it humour, a species of subordinate wit, which owes all to point and effect, and nothing to truth and nature.

To this, however, some exceptions must be made, and amongst them I may instance Molière, Boileau, La Fontaine, Voltaire, and La Bruyère. These authors all possess a rich fund of genuine humour. The comedies

of the first; the second and fourth "Satires" and the "Lutrin" of the second; the fables of the third; the "Candide" of the fourth, and "Les Caractères" of the fifth, all unequivocally demonstrate this. Of these, after Molière, La Bruyère is the most eminent example. His humour is so rich that he may be fairly thought worthy to be contrasted with Goldsmith. Now Goldsmith is certainly the finest humourist in the English language.

In comparing Goldsmith with La Bruyère, however, it is necessary only to consider the former in the light of an essayist; since the chief points of resemblance between these two great men will best be seen by opposing "Les Caractères" to the "Citizen of the World." It is quite true that in thus considering Goldsmith, we forget at once the novelist, the dramatist, the poet—in short, him

"Who ran

Through each mode of the lyre, and was master of all;"

and, consequently, ignore an immense fund of wit enshrined in his other works. But it will be sufficient for my purpose to contrast the two works above named.

Though the vehicle of the expression of their humour is different, the expression itself is very much the same. The "Citizen of the World," as everybody knows, is a collection of papers contributed to a journal called the "Public Ledger." They first appeared under the name of "Chinese Letters," and, we are assured by the biographers of Goldsmith, attracted at the time considerable attention, and met with great applause. It is not apparent that Goldsmith owed his idea to the suggestion of any previous work of a similar kind. It is, therefore, only to be believed that the design is as original as the execution.

Without Theophrastus it may be conjectured that we should not have had La Bruyère. His admiration for the old Greek is thus expressed:—"This work (i. e., the 'Characters' of Theophrastus), is possibly but a simple fragment, but nevertheless, a precious gift of antiquity, and a monument to the vivacity, to the spirit, and to the profound and solid judgment of this philosopher in such an advanced time of life. Indeed, it has always been esteemed a master-piece of its kind; nowhere does the Attic taste manifest itself more conspicuously; nowhere does the elegance of the Grecian spirit appear to greater advantage. It has been called a 'Golden Book!'"*

Supplied, as it were, with the design of his work, it remained for La Bruyère to elaborate it, by throwing into it the experiences he had accumulated by a long intimacy with the Court of Louis XIV. And so far as the depicting of high life goes, it must be allowed that he set about his book with more advantages at his command than ever Goldsmith could boast. Very little is known of the life of La Bruyère. He was born at Dourdan, in the year 1639. He had

* "Discours sur Theophraste:" par Jean de la Bruyère.

purchased for himself a commission in the Treasury of France, at Caen, when Bossuet invited him to Paris in the capacity of teacher of history to the Duke Louis de Bourbon, grandson of the great Condé. This invitation he accepted. He fulfilled his duties up to the hour of his death, possessed of a revenue of a thousand crowns.* In 1687 he published his "*Caractères*"; in 1693 he was received into the French Academy, and he died in 1696. Such is pretty much all that is known of his life.

It is obvious that a man of such observation as La Bruyère could not fail to become a complete master in his knowledge of the life with which he was immediately connected. Of one of the most magnificent Courts of Europe he speedily detected the follies, the vices, the littlenesses, the ignominious squabbings, the subtle operations of the courtier, the licensed wickednesses of the courtesan, all which he has painted in colours undying and inimitable. And perhaps there is not a more conclusive evidence of his genius than his power to interest a remote posterity in descriptions which, though based upon general observations of human nature, yet owe much of their success to follies which have long since expired, and to fashions which can never be revived. It is certain, however, that, whether owing to his position, or to a certain narrow-mindedness, which prohibited him an extensive range of observation, in catholicity, in the power to depict all scenes and all natures, Goldsmith is infinitely his superior. But what La Bruyère has done, Goldsmith could not have done better.

If Goldsmith had to struggle socially against the disadvantages of poverty, intellectually it cannot be doubted that poverty very amply compensated him. His circumstances forced him to be an unwilling spectator of scenes, and the companion of men of whom affluence or his laziness would have kept him ignorant. His "*Citizen of the World*," indeed, is an epitome of London life as it was exhibited to the observer of that age. On the other hand, the "*Caractères*" of La Bruyère display only a very small portion of life at Versailles, and a portion the least recognizable by those accustomed to have dealings with men and women of every-day existence. His book is composed of fragmentary histories of courtiers, satires on Court follies, observations on Court life, which, though profoundly true when taken as the experiences of an observer of Courts, are frequently found false when applied to those beyond the shadow of thrones. But let us read him as he doubtless proposed he should be read. Judge him in the spirit in which he himself wrote. Let us take him as a painter who has imitated certain phases of life, and to these portraits let us oppose those of Goldsmith. It will then be seen that a kindred spirit animated these two authors. Goldsmith was more extended in his views, more discursive in his selections; but the similarity between these authors lies not

* Suard.

in their choice, but in their execution, and this can be easily shown by a few examples. In three lines La Bruyère gives us a finished portrait of a self-important man :—

“N. . . arrive avec grand bruit ; il écarte le monde, se fait faire place ; il gratte, il heurte presque ; il se nomme ; on respire, et il n’entre qu’avec la foule.”

Nothing can be finer than the conciseness and point of this piece of satire. It is the epigrammatic declamation of a man accustomed to minute observation—to the close watching of what apparently appears trifling. It is one of many details with which he constructs the profoundest view of a certain phase of life. Now this is how Goldsmith satirizes much the same kind of individual :—

“When we got in, he welcomed me to his house with great ceremony, and turning to the old woman, asked where was her lady. ‘Good troth,’ replied she, in a peculiar dialect, ‘she’s washing your twa shirts at the next door, because they have taken an oath against lending out the tub any longer.’ ‘My two shirts !’ cried he, in a tone that faltered with confusion : ‘what does the idiot mean?’ ‘I ken what I mean weel enough,’ replied the other : ‘she’s washing your twa shirts at the next door, because—’ ‘Fire and fury ! no more of thy stupid explanations,’ cried he ; ‘go and inform her we have got company.’ Were that Scotch hag to be for ever in the family, she would never learn politeness, nor forget that absurd poisonous accent of hers, or testify the smallest specimen of breeding, or high life ; and yet it is very surprising, too, as I had her from a parliament-man, a friend of mine from the Highlands, one of the politest men in the world : but that’s a secret.”

There is more of broad humour in Goldsmith than in La Bruyère. There was, unquestionably, more of spontaneity about the one than about the other. Impulse or enthusiasm in literature is always prone to exceed the limits allotted to it by an existing knowledge of art ; but then this is the quality that enables a writer to snatch a grace beyond the reach of art. Goldsmith was a warm, impulsive creature. When memory failed to supply him with an illustration for whatever subject he was engaged upon, he invented one ; and so versatile was his knowledge of life that his invention, no matter how highly coloured, was as substantially true as if the occurrence he depicted had actually befallen him. La Bruyère, on the other hand, was polished, reserved, profoundly sagacious, but unwilling to express his belief until the commission of the action that confirmed it. Hence, a certain delicacy ; a certain chasteness of tone ; a certain coldness of expression which communicate to his satires a pungency equal to that which Goldsmith achieves by humour.

Here is a description by La Bruyère of what in his day would be called a “beau :”—

“I hear Theodectus in the anteroom ; as he approaches you, so he

grows more clamorous. Now he has entered. He laughs, he shouts, his noise almost shatters you. You stop your ears: it is thunder. He is not less formidable from the things that he says than from the tone in which he says them. He never permits himself to be subdued, nor ceases his uproar but to discuss unintelligibly all manner of stupid things. He has so little regard for politeness, for time, for persons, that each one has been annoyed by this embodied irritant even before he has had time to make himself felt. Even before he is seated he has unconsciously offended the whole assembly. Is dinner ready?—he is the first to seat himself, and in the best place. He eats, he drinks, he narrates, he jokes, all in the same moment. He has no sense of the presence of others, nor of that of the host, nor attends to the recital of grace. Is it he, or is it Entideum who gives the repast? He assumes all the authority of the host; and it is far less inconvenient to let him have his own way than to enter into a dispute with him. If you play, he will win. He likes to joke those who lose, and he offends them. I give way, at last, and disappear, unable longer either to endure him, or those by whom he is endured."

Who does not recollect Goldsmith's description of a beau: of the fellow "who employs three hours every morning in dressing his head, by which is understood only his hair—who is excessively fond of dancing a minuet with the ladies, by which is only meant walking round the floor eight or ten times with his hat on, affecting great gravity, and sometimes looking tenderly on his partner—who has an infinite variety of small talk upon all occasions, and laughs when he has nothing more to say"?

It is obvious that both these characters are drawn from life. Nor is their value lessened by the fact of their being typical of a society that has vanished. Let us divest Goldsmith's beau of his wig, and La Bruyère's of something of his vehemence, and we shall be astonished to find that after all these two likenesses satirize by their truth the same class of beings in our own as they did in their day. La Bruyère's contemporary popularity was owing very much to his satirizing practised follies and well-known persons. Fashion saw herself admirably reflected in his writings. Nothing can be more admirable than this capacity of delineation. The power that imitates the fashion appeals to those who recognize, as it were, the costume: appeals equally to those who perceive the truth. It not only delights a contemporary age, but awakens the admiration of posterity for that accurate portrayal of motives and actions which is true in all times, as it is the result of a close observation of those principles by which human nature performs its operations. This is the merit of La Bruyère: even in a greater degree the merit of Goldsmith. There is hardly a single description in the "Citizen of the World" that will not be found true of the same follies now, that those descriptions attempted to lash then. We may call such types of human

nature by other names : Beau Tibbs may seem a product of his own century ; the club of authors may have vanished ; the ladies may no longer be called Delias, Clarissas, and Belindas,—may no longer find delight in negro-boys and monkeys, in curious china and antique fans ; the indigent author may now have changed his ways of living, and choose no longer to write with a stocking round his head all the day ; the system of noble patronage may have disappeared ; and, unable to sympathize with the then literary position, we may read with aversion or contempt the fulsome flattery of the author's dedication. But through the silly vices, the transient follies, the *outré* habits, the quaint costumes of a hundred years ago, we shall see in Goldsmith's portraits that evidence of profound observation, that consummate acquaintance with life and human nature which will always render them for all generations the very archetypes of word-painting, the undying representatives of the various class they imitate with such fidelity, and ridicule with such humour and truth.

With Goldsmith's life we are all intimate. It is to be deplored that we know so little of La Bruyère. Yet might not the biography of the one serve as a commentary on the life of the other ? Kindred genius often implies kindred emotions ; and it would not be hard to believe that the same love of humour that originated "*Les Caractères*" emanated from the same genial temperament, the same single-mindedness, the same deep sympathy with misfortune and strong hatred of vice which prompted the descriptions in the "*Citizen of the World*." From the character of La Bruyère, however, as given by the Abbé d'Olivet,* we might, perhaps, feel inclined to doubt the correctness of such a notion. "He has been," says the Abbé, "described to me as a philosopher who had no desire but to live in tranquillity with his friends and his books. making a good choice of both, neither wooing nor shunning pleasure ; moderate in his enjoyments, and ingenious in creating them ; polished in his manners and wise in his conversation ; frightened of all kinds of ambition, even to the ambition of displaying his genius." This certainly does not harmonise with the accounts given of Goldsmith. In the first instance, there was very little of the philosopher about him, and to him repose was simply unendurable. True, he made an excellent choice of both his books and sometimes of his friends ; but he never shunned pleasure ; and his ambition was such as frequently to expose him to the ridicule or expostulation of his friends Johnson, Reynolds, and Beauclerc. But let us judge them in their relative positions, and it will be found not impossible to reconcile their apparent dissimilarity of character. Here was Goldsmith, a man who was always poor, whose social tastes were blunted by the consciousness of an ungainly demeanour which had procured for him the reputation of being the ugliest man in London ; from the upper circles of life he was excluded by the misfor-

† "*Histoire de l'Académie Française*."

tunes of his position, his poverty, his antecedents, and his address. A disposition less spontaneous and benevolent than Goldsmith's would have been hardened by his struggles. His life would have been embittered, his energies would have been blunted. But Goldsmith always had a knack of hoping. Nevertheless because fate seemed perpetually to retard his progress; because he craved with the instincts of genius for pleasures placed beyond the reach of his circumstances; because, conscious of his own powers, he made no scruple to push himself forward, too frequently incited, perhaps, by absolute want—to find his claims denied, his genius unrecognized, up to a period, at least, when its recognition could avail him nothing, his purse vacant of means, and a prison or starvation staring him in the face; because, I say, he found himself opposed by these and innumerable other obstacles, he socially retrograded, purposely to enjoy those lower pleasures which La Bruyère would have shunned, simply because La Bruyère had always been in a position to gratify his predilections without anxiety or labour. But let us imagine Goldsmith in Marseilles, and not in Green-Arbour Court, surrounded by ladies and gentlemen who could appreciate his genius, not by lodging-house keepers and bailiffs who insulted his misery; possessed of a competency that enabled him to live in comparative luxury, not forced to repair constantly to the pawnbroker's for means to procure a dinner:—should we not have had such a character of him as is given by the Abbé d'Olivet to La Bruyère? A hungry man is seldom a philosopher. Would La Bruyère have been choice in his selections of books and friends had he not had means to purchase the one and entertain the other?

Those who can trace an author's disposition in his works can hardly fail to remark that the same tone of thought, the same geniality of temper, the same copiousness of colouring and humour employed in "*Les Caractères*" are also to be found in the "*Citizen of the World*." In support of this, I may instance La Bruyère's famous portrait of the "*Absent Man*." It is conceived in the true spirit of Goldsmith. I could indicate innumerable passages in the "*Citizen of the World*" which seem as much impressed with the genius of La Bruyère as many in La Bruyère's work are impressed with the genius of Goldsmith. But want of space warns me to conclude. It is yet reserved for some able translator to make us better acquainted with the French writer; and, perhaps, we could not pay French and English literature a higher compliment than by calling La Bruyère the French Goldsmith, and Goldsmith the essayist, the English La Bruyère.

W. CLARK RUSSELL.

FINDING BOTH OF THEM.

IT was Worcester Assizes, and Mr. Todhetley was on the grand jury. You see, although Dyke Manor was just within the borders of Warwickshire, the greater portion of the squire's property lay in Worcestershire, also a house that we often lived in, Crabb Cot; and this caused him to be summoned to serve. I forget who was foreman that time: if it was not Sir John Pakington, I suppose it must have been the Honourable Mr. Coventry. Tod would recollect: but I can't get at him now to ask.

The week was jolly. We put up at the "Star and Garter" when we went to Worcester, which was two or three times a-year; generally at the assizes, or the races, or the quarter sessions; one of the busy times.

The Pater would grumble at the bills—and say we boys had no business to be there; but he would take us, if we were at home, for all that. The assizes came on this time the week before our summer holidays were up: the squire wished they had not come on until the week after. Anyway, there we were, in clover: the Pater stewed up in the county courts all day; I and Tod flying about the town, and doing what we liked.

The judges came in from Oxford on the usual day, Saturday. And, to make plain what I am going to tell about, we must go back to that morning and to Dyke Manor. It was broiling hot weather, and Mr. Todhetley, Hugh, and Lena, with old Thomas and Hannah, all came out on the lawn after breakfast to see us start. The open carriage was at the door, with the fine dark horses. When the squire did come out, he liked to do things well; and Dwarf Giles had gone on to Worcester the preceding day with the two saddle-horses, the Pater's and Tod's. They might have ridden them in this morning, but the squire chose to have his horses sleek and fresh when attending the high sheriff.

"Shall I drive, sir?" asked Tod.

"No," said the Pater. "These two have queer tempers, and must be handled carefully." He meant the horses, Bob and Blister. Tod looked at me: he thought he could have managed them quite as well as the Pater.

"Papa," cried Lena, as we were driving off, running up in her white pinafore, with her pretty hair flying, "If you can catch that naughty kidnapper at Worcester, you put her in prison."

The squire nodded emphatically, as much as to say, "Trust me for that." Lena alluded to the woman who had taken her off, and stolen her clothes

two or three weeks before. Tod said afterwards, there must have been some prevision on the child's mind when she said this.

We reached Worcester at twelve. It's a long drive, you know. Lots of country-people had arrived, and the squire went off with some of them. Tod and I thought we'd order luncheon at the Star—a jolly good one; stewed lampreys, kidneys, and cherry tart; and let it go into the squire's bill.

I'm afraid I envied Tod. The old days of travelling post were past, when the sheriff's procession would go out to Whittington to meet the judge's carriage. They came now by rail from Oxford, and the sheriff and his attendants received them at the railway station. It was the first time Tod had been allowed to make one of the gentlemen-attendants. The squire said now he was too young; but he looked so big, and tall, and strong. To see him mount his horse and go cantering off with the rest sent me into a state of envy. Tod saw it.

"Don't drop your mouth, Johnny," said he. "You'll make one of us in another year or two."

I hung about for half an hour, and the procession came back, passing the Star on its way to the county courts. The bells were ringing, the advance heralds blew their trumpets, and the javelin guard rode at a foot pace, their lances in rest, before the high sheriff's grand carriage, with its four prancing horses and their silvered harness. Both the judges had come in, so we knew that business was over at Oxford; they sat opposite to the sheriff and his chaplain. I used to wonder whether they travelled all the way in their wigs and gowns, or robed at Worcester Station. Squire Todhetley rode in the line next the carriage, with some more old ones of consequence; Tod on his fine bay was nearly at the tail, and he gave me a nod in passing. The judges were going to open the commission, and Forge Street was crowded.

The high sheriff that year was a friend of ours, and the Pater had an invitation to the banquet he gave that evening to the judges. Tod thought he ought to have been invited too.

"It's sinfully stingy of him, Johnny. When I am pricked for sheriff—and I suppose my turn will come some time, for Warwickshire, if not for Worcestershire—I'll have more young fellows to my dinner than old men."

The squire, knowing nothing of our mid-day luncheon, was surprised that we chose supper at eight instead of dinner at six; but he told the waiter to give us a good one. We went out while it was getting ready, and walked arm-in-arm through the crowded streets. Worcester is always full on a Saturday evening; it is market-day there, as everybody knows; but on Assize Saturday the streets are nearly impassable. Tod, tall and strong, held on his way, and asked leave of none.

"Now, then, you two gents, can't you go on proper, and not elbow respectable folks like that!"

"Halloa !" cried Tod, turning at the voice, "Is it you, old Jones?"

Old Jones, our parish constable at home—the same that I told you of in "Shaving the Ponies' Tails," who had the warrant for apprehending Tod, and couldn't execute it—touched his hat when he saw it was us, and begged pardon. We asked what he was doing at Worcester; but he had only come over for the day on his own account. "On the spree?" Tod said to him.

"Young Mr. Todhetley," cried he—the way he mostly addressed Tod,—"I'd not be sure but that woman's took—her that served out little Miss Lena."

"That woman !" roared Tod. "Why do you think it?"

Old Jones explained. A woman had been apprehended near Worcester the previous day, on a charge of stripping two little boys of their clothes in Perry Wood. The description given of her answered exactly old Jones thought, to that given by Lena.

"She stripped 'em to the skin," groaned Jones, drawing a long face as he recited the mishap: "two poor little chaps of three years, they was, living in them cottages under the Wood—not as much as their boots did she leave 'em. When they got home, their folks didn't know 'em; quite naked they was, and bleating with terror, like a brace of shorn sheep."

Tod put on his savage face. "And she is taken, you say, Jones?"

"She was took yesterday, sir. They had her before the justices this morning, and the little fellows knowed her at once. As the 'sizes was on, leastways as good as on, their worships committed her for trial there and then. Policeman Chiff told me all about it, and it was him that took her. She's in the county gaol."

We carried the tale to the Pater that night, and he despatched a messenger to Mrs. Todhetley, to say that Lena must be at Worcester on the Monday morning. But there's something to tell about the Sunday yet.

If you have been in Worcester on Assize Sunday, you know how the cathedral is sure on that morning to be crowded. Enough strangers are in the town to fill it; the inhabitants, church people at other times, attend it then; and King Mob flocks in to see the show.

Squire Todhetley was put in the stalls; Tod and I scrambled for places on a bench. The alterations in the cathedral (going on for years before that, and going on for years since, and going on still) caused space to be limited, and it was no end of a cram. While people fought for standing-places, the procession was played in to the crash of the organ. The judges came, glorious in their wigs and gowns; the mayor and aldermen were grand as scarlet and gold chains could make them; and there was a large attendance of the clergy in their white robes. The Bishop had come in from Hartlebury, and was on his throne, and the service began. The Rev. Mr. Wheeler chanted; the good Dean read

the lessons. Of course the music was all right: they put up fine services on Assize Sundays now; and the sheriff's chaplain went up in his black gown to preach the sermon. Three-quarters of an hour, if you'll believe me, before it came to an end!

Ere the organ had well played its Amen to the Bishop's blessing, the crowd began to push out. We pushed with the rest, and took up our places in the long cathedral lobby to see the procession pass back again. It came winding down between the line of javelin-men. Just as the judges were passing, Tod touched me to look opposite. There stood a young boy in dreadful clothes, patched all over, but otherwise clean; with great dark wondering eyes riveted on the judges, as if they had been peacocks on stilts; on their wigs, on their solemn countenances, on their held-up scarlet trains.

Where had I seen those eyes, and their brilliant brightness? Recollection flashed over me before Tod's whisper: "Jake's boy; the youngster we saw in the tent."

To get across the line was impossible; good manners would not permit it, let alone the javelin-guard. And when the procession had passed, leaving nothing but a crowd of shuffling feet and the dust on the white cathedral floor, the boy was gone.

"I say, Johnny, it's rather odd we should come on those tent-people just as the woman has turned up," exclaimed Tod, waking from a reverie after we got clear of the cathedral.

"But you don't think they can be connected, Tod?"

"Well, no; I suppose not. It's a queer coincidence, though."

This we also carried to the Pater, as we had the other news. He was standing in the Star gateway.

"Look here, you boys," said he, after a pause of thought; "keep your eyes open; you may come upon the lad again, or some of his folks. I should like to do something for that poor man; I've wished it ever since he brought home Lena, and that confounded Molly drove him out by way of recompense."

"And if they should be confederates, sir?" suggested Tod.

"Who confederates? What do you mean, Joe?"

"These people and the female-stripper. It seems strange they should both turn up again in the same spot."

The notion took away the Pater's breath. "If I thought that; if I find it is so," he broke forth, "I'll—I'll—transport the lot."

Mrs. Todhetley arrived with Lena on Sunday afternoon. Early on Monday, the Squire and Tod took her to the governor's house at the county prison, where she was to see the woman, as if accidentally, nothing being said to Lena.

The woman was brought in: a bold jade, with a red face: and Lena nearly went into convulsions at the sight of her. There could be no mistake: the woman was the same: and the Pater became red-

hot with anger; especially to think he could not punish her in Worcester.

As the fly went racing up Salt Lane after the interview, on its way to leave the Squire at the county courts, a lad ran past. It was Jake's boy; the same we had seen in the cathedral. Tod leaped up and called to the driver to stop, but the Pater roared out an order to go on. The squire's appearance at the court could not be delayed, and Tod had to stay with Lena. So the clue was lost again. Tod brought Lena to the Star, and then he and I went to the criminal court and bribed a fellow for places. Tod said it would be a sin not to hear the kidnapper tried.

It was nearly the first case called on. Some of the lighter ones were taken first, while the grand jury deliberated on their bills for the graver ones. Her name, as given in, was Nancy Cole, and she tried to excite the sympathies of the judge and jury by reciting a whining account of a deserting husband and other ills. The evidence was quite clear. The two children (little shavers, in petticoats) set up a roar in court at sight of the woman, just as Lena had in the governor's house; and a dealer in marine stores produced their clothes, which he had bought of her. Tod whispered to me that he should go about Worcester after this in daily dread of seeing Lena's blue-silk frock and open-worked stockings hanging in a shop window. Some allusion was spoken during the trial to the raid the prisoners had also recently made on the little daughter of Mr. Todhetley, of Dyke Manor, Warwickshire, and Crabb Cot, Worcestershire, "one of the gentlemen of the grand jury at present sitting in deliberation in an adjoining chamber of the court." But, as the judge said, that could not be received in evidence.

Mrs. Cole brazened it out: the testimony was too strong to attempt denial. "And if she *had* took a few bits o' things, cause she was famishing, she didn't hurt the children. She'd never hurt a child in her life; couldn't do it. Just conterairy to that; she gave 'em sugar-plums—and candy—and a piece of a wig,* she did. What was she to do? Starve? Since her wicked husband that she hadn't seen for this five year deserted of her, and her two boys, fine grown lads both of 'em, had been accused of theft and got put away from her, one into prison t'other into a 'formitory, she hadn't got no soul to care for her nor help her to a bit o' bread. Life was hard; and times was bad; and—there it was. No good o' saying more."

"Guilty," said the foreman of the jury, without turning round. "We find the prisoner guilty, my lord."

The judge sentenced her to six months' imprisonment with hard labour. Mrs. Cole brazened it still.

"Thank you," said she to his lordship, dropping a curtsy as they were taking her from the dock, "and I hope you'll sit there, old gentleman, till I come out."

* A sort of plain bun sold in Worcester.

When the squire was told of the sentence that evening, he said it was too mild by half, and talked of bringing her also to book in Warwick. But Mrs. Todhetley said, "No ; forgive her." After all, it was but the loss of the clothes.

Nothing whatever had come out during the trial to connect Jake with the woman. She appeared to be a stray waif without friends. "And I watched and listened closely for it, mind you, Johnny," remarked Tod.

It was a day or two after this—I think, on the Wednesday evening. The squire's grand-jury duties were over, but he stayed on, intending to make a week of it ; Mrs. Todhetley and Lena had left for home. We had dined late, and Tod and I went for a stroll afterwards, leaving the Pater and an old clergyman, who had dined with us, to their wine. In passing the cooked-meat shop in High-street, we saw a little chap look-in, his face flattened against the panes. Tod laid hold of his shoulder, and the boy turned his brilliant eyes and their hungry expression upon us.

"Do you remember me, Dor?" You see, Tod had not forgotten his name.

Dor evidently did remember. And whether it was that he felt frightened at being accosted, or whether the sight of us brought back to him the image of the dead child-sister lying on the rushes, was best known to himself ; but he burst out crying.

"There's nothing to cry for," said Tod ; "you need not be afraid. Could you eat some of that meat?"

Something like a shiver of glad surprise broke over the boy's face at the question ; just as though he had had no food for weeks. Tod gave him a shilling, and told him to go in and buy some. But the boy looked at the money doubtingly.

"A whole shilling ! They'd think I stole it."

Tod took back the money, and went in himself. He was as proud a fellow as you'd find in the two counties, and yet he would do all sorts of things that many another glanced askance at.

"I want half a pound of beef," said he to the man who was carving, "and some bread, if you sell it. And I'll take one of those small pork pies."

"Shall I put the meat in paper, sir?" asked the man : as if he thought Tod might prefer to eat it there.

"Yes," said Tod. And the customers, working men and a woman in a drab shawl, turned and stared at him.

Tod paid ; took it all in his hands, and we left the shop. He did not mind to be seen carrying the parcels ; but he would have minded letting them know that he was feeding a poor boy.

"Here, Dor, you can take the things now," said he when we had gone a few yards. "Where do you live?"

Dor explained in a fashion. We knew Worcester well, but failed to

understand. "Not far from the big church," he said; and at first we thought he meant the cathedral.

"Never mind," said Tod; "go on, and show us."

He went skimming along, Tod keeping him within arm's length, lest he should try to escape. Why Tod should have suspected he might, I don't know; nothing, as it turned out, could have been farther from Dor's thoughts. The church he spoke of proved to be All Saints'; the boy turned up an entry near to it, and we found ourselves in a regular rookery of dirty, miserable, tumble-down houses. Loose men stood about, pipes in their mouths; women, in tatters, had their hair hanging down.

Dor dived into a dark den that seemed to be reached through a hole you had to stoop under. My patience! what a close place it was, with a smell that nearly knocked you backwards. There was not an earthly thing in the room that we could see, except some straw in a corner, and on that Jake was lying. The boy appeared with a piece of lighted candle, which he had been upstairs to borrow.

Jake was thin enough when we saw him before; he was a skeleton now. His eyes were sunk and glistening, the bones of his thin face stood out, his voice was weak and hollow, and a bad smell came from his breath. He knew us at once, and smiled.

"What's the matter?" asked Tod, speaking gently. "You look very ill."

"I be very ill, master; I've been getting worse ever since."

His history was this. The same night that we had seen the tent at Cookhill, some travelling people of Jake's fraternity happened to encamp close to it for the night. By their help, the dead child was removed as far as Evesham, and there buried. Jake, his wife, and son went on to Worcester, and there the man was taken worse; they had been in this room since; the wife had found a place to go to twice a week, washing, earning her food and a shilling each time. It was all they had to depend upon, these two shillings weekly; and the few bits o' things they had, to use Jake's words, had been taken by the landlord for rent. But to see Jake's resignation was something curious.

"He was very good," he said, alluding to the landlord and the seizure; "he left me the straw. When he saw how bad I was, he wouldn't take it. We had been obliged to sell the tent, and there was a'most nothing for him."

"Have you had no medicine? have you had no advice?" cried Tod, speaking as if he had a lump in his throat.

Yes, he had had medicine; the wife went for it to the free place (he meant the dispensary) twice a week, and a young doctor had been to see him.

Dor opened the paper of meat, and showed it to his father. "The gentleman bought it me," he said; "and this, and this. Couldn't you eat some?"

I saw the eager look that arose for a moment to Jake's face at sight of the meat : three slices of nice cold boiled beef, better than what we got at school. Dor held out one in his fingers ; the man broke off a morsel, put it into his mouth, and had a choking fit.

"It's of no use, Dor."

"Is his name 'Dor'?" asked Tod.

"His name is James, sir ; same as mine," answered Jake, panting a little from the exertion of swallowing the meat. "The wife, she has called him 'Dor' for 'dear,' and I've fell into it. She has called me Jake all along."

Tod felt something ought to be done to help him, but he had no more idea what than the man in the moon. I had less. As Dor piloted us to the open street, we asked him where his mother was. It was one of her working days out, he answered ; she was always kept late.

"Could he drink wine, do you think, Dor?"

"The gentleman said he was to have it," answered Dor, alluding to the doctor.

"How old are you, Dor?"

"I'm ten."

"Johnny, I wonder if there's any place where they sell beef-tea?" cried Tod, as we went up Broad Street. "My goodness ! lying there in that state, with no help !"

"I never saw anything so bad before, Tod."

"Do you know what I kept thinking of all the time? I could not get it out of my head."

"What?"

"Of Lazarus at the rich man's gate. Johnny, lad, there seems an awful responsibility lying on some of us."

To hear Tod say such a thing was stranger than all. He set off running, and burst into our sitting-room in the Star, startling the Pater, who was alone, reading one of the Worcester papers with his spectacles on. Tod sat down and told him all.

"Dear me ! dear me !" cried the Pater, growing red as he listened. "Why, Joe ! the poor fellow must be dying."

"He may not have gone too far for recovery, father," was Tod's answer. "If we had to lie in that close hole, and had nothing to eat or drink, we should probably soon become skeletons also. He may get well yet with proper care and treatment."

"It seems to me that the first thing to do is to get him into the Infirmary," remarked the Pater.

"And it ought to be done early to-morrow morning, sir ; if it's too late to-night.

The Pater got up in a bustle, put on his hat, and went out. He was going to his old friend, the great surgeon, Henry Carden. Tod ran after him up Forgate Street, but was sent back to me. We stood at

the door of the hotel, and in a few moments saw them coming along, the Pater arm-in-arm with Mr. Carden. He had come out as readily to visit the poor helpless man as he would to visit a rich one. Perhaps more so. They stopped when they saw us, and Mr. Carden asked Tod some of the particulars.

"You can get him admitted to the Infirmary at once, can you not?" said the Pater impatiently, who was all on thorns to have something done.

"By what I can gather, it is not a case for the Infirmary," was the answer of its chief surgeon. "We'll see."

Down we went, walking fast: the Pater and Mr. Carden in front, I and Tod at their heels; and found the room again with some difficulty. The wife was in then, and had made a handful of fire in the grate. What with the smoke, and what with the other agreeable accompaniments, we were nearly stifled.

If ever I wished to be a doctor, it was when I saw Mr. Carden with that poor sick man. He was so gentle with him, so cheery and kind. Had Jake been a duke, I don't see that he could have been treated differently. There was something superior about the man, too, as though he had seen better days.

"What is your name?" asked Mr. Carden.

"James Winter, sir, a native of Herefordshire. I was on my way there when I was taken ill in this place."

"What to do? To get work?"

"No, sir; to die. It don't much matter, though; God's here as well as there."

"We are thinking of placing you in the Infirmary, Jake," cried the Pater. "You'll have every comfort there, and the best of attendance. This gentleman——"

"We'll see—we'll see," interposed Mr. Carden, breaking in hastily on the promises. "I am not sure that the Infirmary will do for him."

"It's too late, sir, I think," said Jake, quietly, to Mr. Carden.

Mr. Carden made no reply. He asked the woman if she had such a thing as a tea-cup or wine-glass. She produced a cracked cup with the handle off and a notch in the rim. Mr. Carden poured something into it that he had brought in his pocket, and stooped over the man. Jake began to speak in his faint voice.

"Sir, I'd not seem ungrateful, but I'd like to stay here with the wife and boy to the last. It can't be for long now."

"Drink this; it will do you good," said Mr. Carden, holding the cup to his lips.

"This close place is a change from the tent," I said to the woman, who was stooping over the bit of fire.

Such a look of regret came upon her countenance as she lifted it, just as if the tent had been a palace of gold. "When we got here, master,

it was after that two days' rain, and the ground was sopping. It didn't do for *him*"—glancing round at the straw. "He was getting mighty bad then, and we just put our heads into this place—bad luck to us!"

The squire gave her some silver, and told her to get anything in she thought best. It was too late to do more that night. The ten o'clock bell was ringing as we went out.

"Won't it do to move him to the Infirmary?" were the Pater's first words to Mr. Carden.

"Certainly not. The man's hours are numbered."

"There is no hope, I suppose?"

"Not the least. He may be said to be dying now."

No time was lost in the morning. When Squire Todhetley took a will to heart he carried it out, and speedily. A decent room, with an airy window, was found in the same block of buildings; a bed and other things were put in it, some clothes were redeemed, and by twelve o'clock in the day Jake was comfortably lying there. The Pater seemed to think that this was not enough: he wanted to do more.

"His humanity to my girl kept him from seeing the last moments of his," said he. "The little help we can give him now is no return for that."

Food and clothes, and a dry, comfortable room, and wine and proper things for Jake—of which he could not swallow much. The woman was not to go out to work again while he lasted, but to stay at home, and attend to him.

"I shall be at liberty by the hop-picking time," she said, with a sigh. Ah, poor creature! long before that.

When Tod and I went in later in the afternoon, she had just given Jake, she said, some physic, ordered by Mr. Carden. She and the boy sat by the fire, tea and bread-and-butter on the deal table between them. Jake lay in bed, his head raised on account of his breathing. I thought he was better; but his thin white face, with the dark, earnest, glistening eyes, was almost painful to look upon.

"The reading-gentleman have been in," cried the woman, suddenly. "He's coming again, he says, the night or the morning."

Tod looked puzzled, and Jake explained. A good young clergyman, who had found him out a day or two before, had been in each day since with his Bible, to read and pray. "God bless him!" said Jake.

"Why did you go away so suddenly?" Tod asked, alluding to the hasty departure from Cookhill. "My father was intending to do something for you."

"I didn't know that, sir. Many thanks all the same. I'd like to thank *you* too, sir," he went on, after a fit of coughing. "I've wanted to thank you ever since. When you gave me your arm up the lane, and said them pleasant things to me about having a little child in heaven, you knew she was gone."

"Yes."

"It broke the trouble to me, sir. My wife heard me coughing afar off, and came out o' the tent. She didn't say at first what there was in the tent, but began telling how you had been there. It made me know what had happened; and when she set on a-grieving, I told her not to: Carry was gone up to be an angel in Heaven."

Tod touched the hand he put out, not speaking.

"She's waiting for me, sir," he continued, in a fainter whisper. "I'm as sure of it as if I saw her. The little girl I found and carried to the great house has got rich friends and a fine home to shelter her; mine had none, and so it was for the best that she should go. God has been very good to me. Instead of letting me fret after her, or murmur at lying helpless like this, He only gives me peace."

"That man must have had a good mother," cried out Tod, as we went away down the entry. And I looked up at him, he spoke so queerly.

"Do you think he'll get better, Tod? He does not seem as bad as he did last night."

"Get better!" retorted Tod. "You'll always be a muff, Johnny. Why every breath he takes threatens to be his last. He is miles worse than he was when we found him. This is Thursday: I don't believe he can last out longer than the week; and I think Mr. Carden knows it."

He did not last so long. On the Saturday morning, just before we were going to start for home, the wife came up to the Star with the news. Jake had died at ten the previous night.

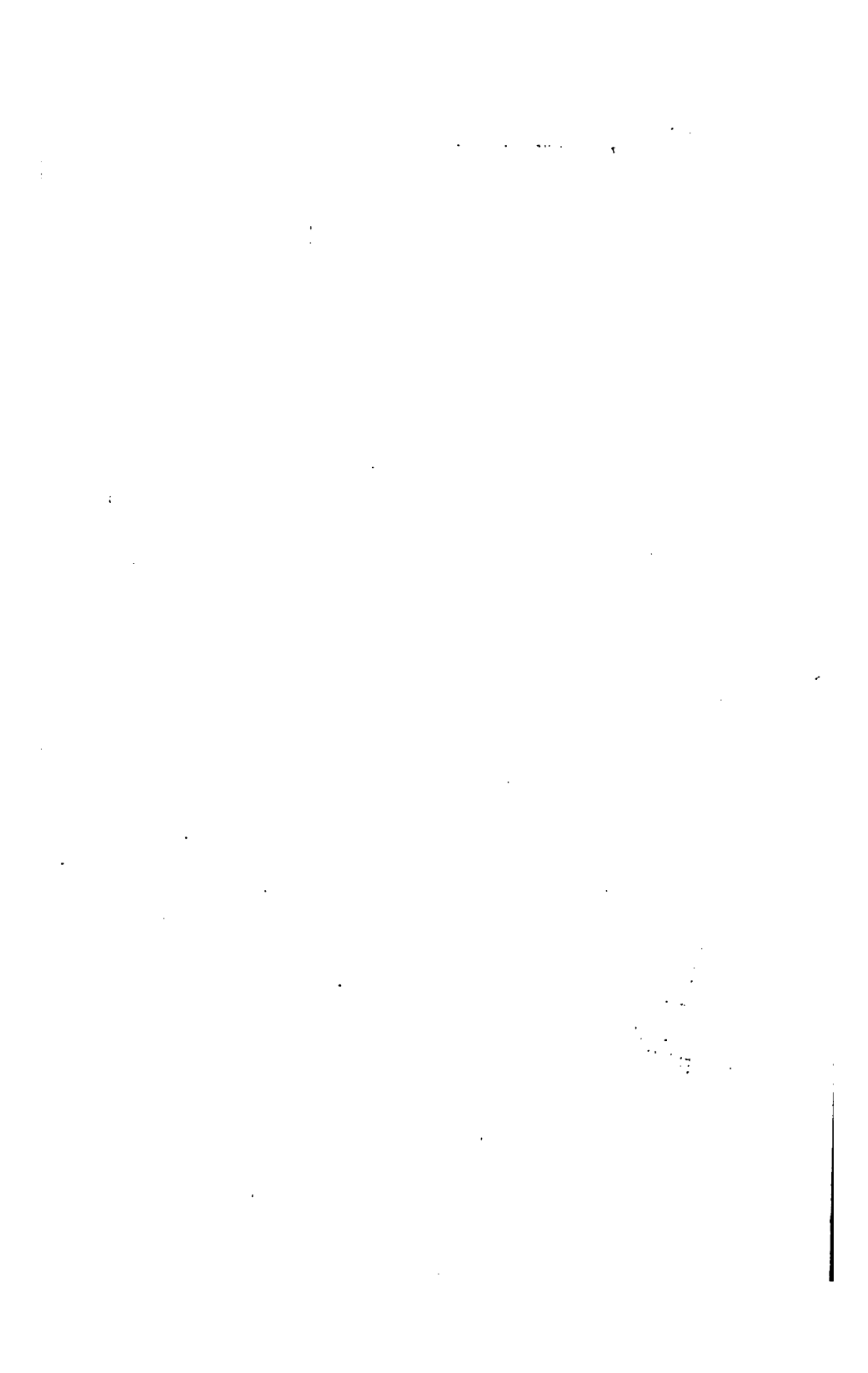
"He went off quiet," said she to the Squire. "I asked if he'd not like a dhrink; but he wouldn't have it: the good gentleman had been there giving him the bread and wine, and he said he'd take nothing, he thought, after that. 'I'm going, Mary,' he suddenly says to me about ten o'clock, and he called Dor up and shook hands with him, and bade him be good to me, and then he shook hands with me. 'God bless ye both,' says he, 'for Christ's sake; and God bless the friends who have been kind to us!' And with that he died."

That's all for now. And I hope no one will think I invented the account of Jake's death, for I should not like to do it. The wife related it to us in the exact words written.

"And I able to do so little for him!" broke forth the squire, suddenly, when we were about half way home; and he lashed up Bob and Blister regardless of their tempers. Which the animals did not relish.

It's not much of a story this time. But I thought you would like to know how that assize week ended the matters told of last: bringing imprisonment to the kidnapping woman, and to Jake death.

JOHNNY LUDLOW.





MARGARET.

MARGARET.

*Low at her feet the daisy lies,
She sings a burden old and sweet,
She sings (the summer daylight flies)
"Si douce est la Margarete."*

"By all thy tongues of silver flame,
By thy heart's golden fret,
I pray thee, and by our one name,
For I am Margaret,
I pray thee take my doubt away,
And make me know my lot,
Thy silver leaves I pluck and say,
'He loves me—loves me not ;'
Thy silver leaves fall one by one,
(He loves me—loves me not),
And starlike glimmer faint upon
The darkening garden-plot.
He loves me—he is far above,
And I am lowliest;
He loves me not—but so he love
None other, I can rest.
He loves me—loves me not.—O flower,
If now my lover came,
Thy sacred charm would lose its power,
—Gold fire and silver flame—
Divine for me a happy lot,
I doubt, I hope, I fear.
O joy ! (he loves me—loves me not
—He loves me) he is here !"

*Low at her feet her lover lies,
He sings a burden old and sweet,
He sings (the summer daylight dies),
"Si douce est la Margarete."*

IN QUEST OF A DREAM.

THOUGH brought up with the certainty of eventually succeeding to my uncle's enormous wealth, he had notwithstanding placed me in a Government office, as he objected to lazy men. I hated work, and went to it with great reluctance and little energy—always, however, consoling myself that I was not dependent upon the fruit of my labours. To my uncle I was truly and sincerely attached, and it was a frightful blow to me, when I found, on my return from a fishing-tour I had made in Norway in 1861, that he had suddenly disappeared. He left no word behind him to account for this strange proceeding, and though the most rigorous search was instituted, nothing could ever be heard of the old gentleman.

A year after I married, and continued plodding on at my post as before.

In July, 1863, I dreamed a strangely curious dream. It was so vivid and lifelike that I could not throw the recollection off my mind, and when, some few nights after, I dreamed it again, it had taken a dangerously powerful hold upon me. It haunted me, it would not let me rest; all night, all day, through all my work, I was pursued by the one image; goaded almost to madness by it, I hardly knew what I did. My wife, to whom I had at length related it, ineffectually tried to banish its baneful influence; in vain; the hold it had gained upon me was so strong that I was incapable of work or thought. I grew quite enwrapt with its influence, till at last it seemed as though *it* were the only real thing, and outward objects chimeras. To rouse myself was impossible, and I only wonder, now I recall it, that my state of mind did not produce brain-fever. I grew careless to business, forgetful of everything, and dead to all feelings.

At last a climax came to this state of affairs by my dreaming my dread dream again once more, and next morning I made up my mind. I felt this state of things could go on no longer; I must find the place I always saw so vividly. Perhaps afterwards peace might be restored to my perturbed senses. I threw up my office, realized the little money I possessed, and only then communicated my determination to my wife, told her that she had better return to her family during my absence, and stated my plans to her.

Poor Mary! looking back calmly, I value and wonder at the patience with which she bore this act on my part. She soon perceived entreaty was hopeless, that I would not alter my plans, that nothing would dis-

suade me from this wild-geese chase ; and after one terrible scene, in which she implored to be allowed to accompany me, we parted. I think she hoped that the change of air and scene might be of benefit to me, for I was really no imaginative man ; but my physique may have been somewhat exhausted and wearied, for I had not left home for four years, and the unaccustomed strain had told upon me.

So I set off, not knowing for what place I was bound, except that I was going somewhere on the Continent ; the scenery and surroundings of my vision could not lie in England.

The night I slept at Rotterdam—for I had gone there first—I once more dreamed my dream.

At first I felt myself sleeping heavily, and I was somehow aware of the fact that I slept. Then suddenly there came a fearful shock, as of a jolt against some heavy obstacle, and I was thrown ; from what, or out of what, I do not know. Though stunned for a few seconds, I soon recovered, and found myself lying stretched on the ground. As I looked around me, I saw that I was in a mountainous region, and the place where I had been thrown, a steep bank of grass, edging a narrow road leading along at the base of the hills ; it appeared to be a gorge that ran between them, and I could see the white road winding tortuously for some distance further on, until it lost itself among the dark, sombre pines that clothed the hills. Only a small strip of sky was visible, of an intense blue, against which the dark green fringes of the pines stood out like taper fingers pointing upwards ; here and there jutted out masses of rock, ragged and wild in outline, in part overgrown with soft green moss, bare in places, and again partly encrusted with lichen of a bright orange hue. Flowers there were few, the whole vegetation bearing the stamp of a high region. Only here and there a few bright clumps of purple heather give a warm colour to the landscape, which, without them, would be but a dull monotony of tall majestic firs rising towards heaven, with a soft, mossy carpet of a dark green hue nestling at their feet.

Recovering from my shock, I rose and looked around me more closely. It was a wild, weird spot ; even the sunlight only pierced through the thick masses of pine in irregular patches, dappling the moss with gold wherever it fell. The cause of my overthrow I could not discern, nor where I was seated when I fell. Close by was a cross road, not visible from the bank ; it was a divergence from the main path, and two others also branched here. A sign-post stretched out its arms in the various directions, bearing the names of the nearest villages, but I could never read the writing upon it. This was strange, for I was well aware that they were printed there clearly enough in black letters on a white ground. Turning a sharp corner, I came upon a huge block of variegated sandstone, at its foot stood a crucifix of plain, brown, unpolished wood ; carved on it, were either initials or a name, yet these also baffled all my attempts to read them. No soon had my eye fixed them to take

in their meaning than they seemed to blend and to become illegible. Below was written a date and the sentence: "Priez pour lui."

In the midst of this curious scene, I felt myself lost and bewildered, unable to understand how I was there. Each time that feeling came over me, the whole picture vanished, as though touched with a magician's wand, and I continued sleeping undisturbedly as before.

I led a nomadic life after this, not knowing from one day to another where I should be or go. From Rotterdam I steamed up the Rhine as far as Coblenz. Its beauties enchanted me; its castle-crowned, vine-clad hills delighted my eye. I should have revelled in all this lovely scenery, had not that dream-picture destroyed all pleasure and enjoyment for me. These remembrances would not let me rest, and impelled me on—still on—as by some wild unknown power.

From Coblenz I made walking tours into the neighbourhood. Having explored that, and neither finding nor hearing of any place answering to my sketch, I proceeded farther up the river. So time carried me on to the month of October.

Towards that month I had looked forward with great hope, as likely to afford me some news of what I sought. I knew that the vintagers came from all parts of the Rhine, and felt certain, if the place I was in quest of were anywhere near its banks, I should not fail to hear of it. Never, for one moment, had it occurred to me that the locality I was in search of might have existence only in my imagination. I felt as sure of its reality as though I had been there.

Up and down the Rhine I wandered, during the time the grapes were gathered, obtaining permission to enter all the vineyards, and everywhere addressing the vintagers with my one eternal question. At last the grape harvest was over, the must had been extracted and left to ferment; the leaves had fallen, and an autumnal look overspread the landscape; it grew colder, and here was I no nearer the object of my search than two months previously. Of course I had heard of cross-roads innumerable; no workman or peasant who could not tell me of one, and of winding white roads, of tall majestic pines; but the plain wooden cross was still the stumbling-block in the narrative. I was growing desperate, and almost repented my resolve to stay away till I found the place. I feared my search would be little advanced during the winter months. In so wild a spot as that I sought, personal inspection would then be quite impossible. So affairs were beginning to look very black, and I thought of writing to England, to say I would return for the winter, and resume my voyage of discovery next spring, when an unexpected event overthrew all my plans.

I was at this time proceeding slowly up the river towards Basle, and thinking to explore Switzerland next, when walking one day for several miles, en route for the nearest village, I was overtaken by a heavy shower of rain. It was an autumnal rain, and it continued

to pour in torrents all day. Though I was walking through a forest of thick pines, even they could not shelter me from the pelting wet, and ere I saw the end of the wood before me, after which I knew I had still five miles of road to walk over, I was drenched. Shelter was not to be had, and to stop where I was most dangerous. So I bravely continued my dreary march. At all times a walk through a pine forest is sombre and dark, and the light that prevails a greenish dusk, even when the bright sunlight is streaming over the tops of the trees; but when the sky is grey and leaden, and the rain is pouring down, it is truly a picture of the desolation of gloom.

Wearry, footsore, and wet through, I at length arrived at the village for which I was bound. After warming my numbed limbs by the side of a bright fire of crackling logs and fir-cones, and learning from the inn-keepers that the weather had probably broken up for the year, I retired to rest.

I slept off my fatigue, as I thought, and woke, feeling very feeble, as though I had been undergoing a sound castigation the day before, or had been rowing, or exerting myself unusually in some way. But herein I soon found I was mistaken; for when I was wide awake enough to draw aside the curtain and look around the room, I was struck with its altered aspect. A general air of cheerfulness pervaded it, as though a woman's hands had been busy therein, and by my side stood a little table filled with medicine-bottles and cooling drinks.

"Good Heavens!" I exclaimed, "can I have been ill? Why, let me see, what did I do last?"

Then the recollection of that wretched walk in the rain came clearly back to me, and I grew curious to learn more; whether I had been laid up, and how long. I rang my bell; almost immediately it was answered by the landlady.

"Oh, my good sir!" she cried, bustling in, "how glad we were to hear your bell. We feared you were going to die, and though my husband and I did all we could, we were afraid, even with our kind doctor's help, we should not preserve your life!"

I saw by the woman's face how truly heart-felt was her pleasure; tears of joy were streaming down her good old cheeks. I feebly attempted to thank her for all her kindness to me, which I felt must have been great, and said how sorry I was to have been such a trouble to them.

"We did not think of trouble, sir, if you only got well. It bothered us that we did not know who, and where your friends are, to let them know you were ill. Now all the roads are snowed up, and we can't send news anywhere."

"All the roads snowed up!" I exclaimed, suddenly growing alive to the full horror of what she was relating. "Tell me, my good woman, how long have I been ill?"

"Three weeks, sir! and unconscious all the time!"

I felt considerably relieved by her reply. Owing to my plans being unfixed, and myself erratic during this journey, three weeks without news was not long enough to make Mary anxious. Now I was desirous to communicate with her at once; but my landlady replied, on enquiry, that it was impossible.

"Do you think I can soon find a messenger to go to the nearest postal town?"

"Hardly, sir; it all depends how the weather continues. While it snows, and the ground is soft, no one can go between here and B——. We are often without communication for months!"

Here was an unlooked-for hindrance! But I deemed the good woman's story exaggerated. Never having experienced a continental winter, I did not know its severity. I was soon to learn it.

When I was first up, after my illness, and looked out of the window, I saw that all idea of going on appeared desperate. The snow was piled high, and as it continued to fall, was loose and soft, impassable for man or beast. There was nothing for it; I must resign myself to stay here, trusting that every day would bring some improvement in the weather, so that I might at least let my wife know my whereabouts. I was still far too weak to feel this restraint irksome, or the rest it would entail, painful. Looking back on that winter, I seem to have dozed it away, done everything in a half sleepy state, caused solely by debility, I now feel convinced.

A curious life I led among the people of that village, the only stranger and idler in their circle. I soon learned to know their ways and habits of life. I became thoroughly conversant with their tongue, which I made my study during these winter days, and grew to respect the people among whom I moved, to admire and like their simple, honest ways of life. The time did not hang heavily on my hands. Besides my study of German, I helped my landlord to add up the accounts of his summer profits, and even learnt to carve little wood ornaments, such as I saw the people make. The rural simplicity and freshness of the life did me good. I felt I was resting mentally and bodily, that I was gaining new strength and courage to fight my way in the world, which before I had fought but languidly, a disappointed being whose prospects in life had been blighted.

At length it ceased snowing awhile, the white mass froze over, and a farmer more foolhardy or courageous than the rest, determined to set off to the town to lay in a fresh supply of necessities. Innumerable were the commissions he was begged to execute, the villagers well knowing there would not be another chance of correspondence with the outer world for, perhaps, the whole winter. I was a suppliant that he would post some letters for me and enquire for others. He promised to do so, and set off, accompanied by the good wishes of all the hamlet. Had

I felt strong and well—I should, no doubt, have tried to accompany the man; but I was still far from being so, and owing to constant relapses of weakness, I dared not attempt it.

After my missives to my wife had departed in the farmer's pocket, I felt easier. I foresaw that until the spring I could hardly look for release, and therefore thought it the truest philosophy to make the best of inevitable circumstances. Nor had I any longer that burning desire to find the place I had dreamed of; the fearful craving to find the spot had softened down, and though I had still a kind of curiosity about the matter, it was no longer the impetus as from a power I could not check that had impelled me before to proceed.

Thus matters stood when, after an absence of a fortnight, the adventurous farmer returned safe and well to the hamlet. For each person he had brought something, and all wanted to hear his news. So in the evening he came into the large parlour at the inn, and by the side of a blazing fire, among the assembled villagers, he recounted his story and told us news of the world. The scene was truly patriarchal, and I was interested and amused. The men were carving in wood, smoking, or drinking, and the women either spinning, or knitting their eternal stocking. Accounts of matters without sounded to me as if they came from another planet, so completely had I grown amalgamated into the uniform quiet of the village.

He brought me many letters, mostly from my wife. Some written as though she were certain they would reach me, but the latter ones growing very alarmed in tone at my continued silence. I felt thankful her uneasiness would now be relieved. It had begun to snow once more, and I knew, therefore, that it might be a long time before I could send for my letters again. However, all was well in England, and on that point I was consoled.

Time sped on, spring was drawing nearer, and the chance of a thaw contemplated. At that time another expedition was undertaken to B——, but even then I did not feel the right amount of power to join. I determined now to wait for the warmer days. When the party returned they brought me a whole budget of letters from my wife. I opened and read them chronologically, fortunately for their fate; had I read the last first, the others, I fear, would have stood a very poor chance of being perused.

This last letter was to me as though a bomb had suddenly fallen into my quiet life; all my piece of mind fled after I read it, and my anxiety to get away from this place awoke again. The letter from my wife itself was short, saying she had written all news but a few days before, but the enclosed had come for me, and as she did not know either handwriting or postmark, had sent it on unopened. I took out the enclosure, looked at it, and when I had done so, felt as if I had been shot through the heart. I gazed, I stared, I turned the letter over and over to assure

myself I was not mistaken ; then, too much overcome by the surprise, I staggered back into a chair, and sat for some moments unable to open the envelope from sheer astonishment. For it was addressed in characters I had despaired of ever seeing again in this world. It was the handwriting of my long-lost uncle ! At last I recovered somewhat, hastily broke the seal, and read as follows :—

“MY DEAR NEPHEW,—Tired and wearied of life in a town, and among men, I suddenly resolved, while you were in Norway, to flee old haunts, and to live in some quiet and unknown locality, there to end my days, far from the noise and strife of the world. Still my love for you made me fearful lest I should be weak when the final wrench and parting came, wherefore I determined to avoid it. I am still seeking a home, not yet having found one to please me, and it was my original intention never to communicate with you again. I mean to send for my trusty old servant, Gibson, to be my constant companion, and intended to leave my will, papers, &c., with him at my death, to be then given to you. I do not know why, it must be an old man's weakness, but I am impelled to write to you to-day, and wish very much to hear from you. Therefore, my dear Nephew, write to me soon, and direct *Poste Restante*, at X——, where I hope to be shortly. Your affectionate Uncle,

CHARLES JOHNSTON.”

I was utterly dumbfounded by the receipt of this epistle, written five years ago. How was it that it had only just come into my hands ? What should I do ? Reply to it. Why, my uncle would by now be far away from X——. How unkind, heartless, and ungrateful he must have considered my conduct during all this time ! This idea grieved me terribly.

This resolve, though so curious, was consistent with his eccentric character ; it did not, therefore, astonish me much. I knew people had often held him to be half mad.

My first consideration now was to find my uncle, and to decide the manner of doing so. I pondered long, at last I determined to proceed to the place mentioned in his letter, which I found to be among the Vosges Mountains. I might there best learn of his whereabouts. Had he been there frequently to enquire for letters, he could not fail to be noted in so small a town.

Accordingly I wrote to my wife, feeling assured, I said, that under such circumstances she would no longer bitterly reproach me for my absence from England. Reproaches I knew to have merited only too well.

It was the beginning of April ; the weather had become sunny and spring-like, and I could leave the hamlet without difficulty. I bade farewell to my village home and kind friends with real regret, promising, if

I ever could, to return among them some day, and and to bring my wife with me ; which promise I have strictly kept.

After a tedious journey, in which I was too impatient to get on to observe the scenery I passed, I at length arrived at X——.

Need I relate that my first destination was the post-office. There I queried officials and postmaster as to whether any Englishman, by name Charles Johnston, had called frequently, five years ago, for letters left, *poste restante*. The officials had few of them been there so long, and the postmaster who had, felt convinced he had never seen a gentleman of that name.

This was an utterly unlooked-for blow. Crestfallen and unhappy, I returned to my hotel, unable to imagine what I should do next. The genuineness of the letter I had received was undoubted ; it was written in my uncle's peculiar handwriting, which would be very hard to imitate ; besides, where would be the object of forgery ? The post-mark, though of quite recent date, bore the stamp of X—— upon it, but the postmaster had told me that this was also the stamp for many of the neighbouring villages. My only resource seemed to be to explore these ; it looked like a hopeless task, and I went to work dejectedly and sick at heart. I had made so sure of learning something here.

Though I felt that these explorations could but be unsuccessful, yet I did not wish to leave a loophole of chance untried ; I might then at least not have to reproach myself in after-years for having neglected any means of discovering my lost relative. With natural unwillingness to bring the story into notoriety, I had avoided calling in the aid of the police ; if I could, I preferred exhausting all my own powers of search first.

Hiring a good horse, I set off without any spirit in my enterprise, almost letting my nag bear me where it liked. The excitement, the rapid travelling, the disappointment on arriving at my goal, after the quiet life I had led all winter, added to my not having recovered my full strength since my fever, had quite unstrung my nerves. I felt weak and ill.

Thus I rode on for days, sometimes returning to X——, at night, otherwise staying at some little village. Object in my wanderings I seemed to have none.

Leaving X—— one day in this frame of mind, I rode on and on, not even looking about me, though the scenery was wild and splendid through which I passed, and would at other times have delighted me ; I went forward in a kind of thoughtless, senseless state, only engendered by misery, and was aware of nothing.

Suddenly I felt myself heavily thrown off my seat, became stunned by my fall, and when I recovered, found myself lying on a steep bank of grass. I looked around me.

Good Heavens ! am I dreaming again ? Is this true ? Can this be reality ? It is the very spot of my dream !

Fearfully nervous, excited to the highest pitch, I hastily raised my self, and turned the corner so familiar to me. There—yes, there—straight before me was the sign-post, the huge block of variegated sandstone, and the plain wooden-cross. I staggered towards it and read inscribed the date, July 1st, 1861, and the initials C. J.

Completely overcome, I fell down at its foot, worn out bodily and mentally.

How long I lay thus I do not know ; at length I gathered strength to examine the place more narrowly. It was all exactly as I had dreamed it ; even the very effects of sunlight and shade were identical. My horse was nowhere to be seen ; he had evidently decamped. The cause of his stumble was easily discernible, for large boulders lay across the road, against one of which, probably dreaming like his master, he had stepped.

What to do now ? I was tired to death, but I could not stay here all night ; I must continue my journey on foot, and resolving thus, I entered one of the cross-roads.

Now I was more bent than ever on solving this mystery, though I died for it, though I neglected all other duties ; for were not the initials on the cross those of my uncle, the day of the month that when I first had this dream-picture, now so suddenly found in reality, and the date five years ago ? My head whirled as it tried to connect these isolated facts. I continued meanwhile to plod on, growing more tired at each step, till I could hardly crawl farther. Just as I determined to give up for the day, and to stay under the shelter of the trees that night, I saw a tiny wood-hut in the distance. Collecting all my slender power into one last effort, I went on towards it, and sunk exhausted at its threshold.

The sound of my fall was heard within ; the door was cautiously opened ; an old woman's face, the most repulsive it has ever been my lot to set eyes on, peeped out.

"For the love of heaven," I gasped in French, "a drop of water—I am fainting;" and in speaking, I lifted up my head.

Scarcely had she scanned my face than she uttered a wild shriek, and would have fallen, but for the door by which she clung for support.

"Water !" I wailed ; "some water. Woman, why do you gaze at me so ? Some water, I say."

My half-pleading, half-peremptory tone, caused her to obey, and mechanically she fetched me some, her eyes hardly averted from me. I swallowed it eagerly. Refreshed, I rose and faced her.

"Can you give me a night's lodging ?" I asked. "I am tired, and have lost my way."

The words had no sooner passed my lips than she turned perfectly

livid, her ugly visage looking still more hideous. Falling on her knees, she moaned out, betwixt weeping and trembling, "Oh ! sir, have mercy on me—have mercy on me ! Oh ! forgive me, and let me live a little longer, fully to repent. I have tried all in my power to expiate it ; I have indeed," she cried, looking up at me with an abject, pleading expression.

I was amazed. My speechlessness made her only more frightened, and she cowered and crouched still lower before me, till she looked like a serpent writhing in the dust. Even at that moment I could not help the thought flashing through my head, what a subject for an artist !—what an impersonation of Satan !

At last I found words to speak. "My good woman," I said, "I do not know what you desire of me, or for whom you take me. I am only a poor Englishman, who has lost his way, and begs you for a night's shelter. Get up, and be kind enough to prepare me a bed."

The gentleness of my address struck her, and was evidently unexpected. She stared at me.

"You think I can't remember ; that five years have destroyed my memory. Oh ! no ; you are too like him."

Her words struck me ; the curious coincidences flashed upon my understanding. Five years ago—add this to the cross bearing my uncle's initials ; surely there must be some connection in it all.

"Woman," I gasped, "get up from off the floor, and tell me what happened five years ago. What is the crime you have repented of ? tell me, or your life is not worth a franc ;" and as I spoke, I drew a pistol from my pocket.

She essayed to speak, but articulation failed her. Then a more womanly look came, and, bursting into tears, she sobbed out, "It was all through Jacques, monsieur ; it was all owing to Jacques ; had he been a better son to his poor old mother, and not left her to starve, she would not have grown so wicked."

This touch of the mother, recalling the true feminine nature, softened me. Laying down my weapon, I said, "What did Jacques do ? Try and come to the point of your narrative at once."

"Ah ! monsieur, it is now sixteen years ago. I lived at X—— then ; my good man had been dead some years, and we were nearly starving. Said my Jacques to me, "Mother, I will go to England, and see if I can earn more money there. He was a skilful workman was my son ; and, oh ! monsieur, so fine a lad, no woman's heart could desire a finer. Well, sir, he went, and though his going well nigh broke my heart, I thought it was for his good, and so was silent. Every year he regularly sent me money, and I was comfortable and easy."

"At last the money got less, and then he stopped sending altogether. I learned from strangers that my Jacques was wicked, and had got into bad ways. Oh, I was heart-broken. Not to hear the neighbours' scorn,

I came to dwell in this squalid hut, and have lived here ever since on what I could find to support me. I had a little money left of what Jacques had sent me last, and all went well for a time.

"But then the money was gone; I was too feeble to work, nor did I like asking for any at X——, where all the people taunted me with my undutiful child, and so I determined to die if I could not find food out here.

"It was just at this time, monsieur, when I was desperate, and so hungry that I went out into the wood where the roads meet. They are seldom used for traffic now, as they are too winding, and nearer cuts have been made. I had never met anyone in them all the time I lived here. I had gone out to search for berries, hoping to find a meal. What was my surprise, on coming to the large stone that juts out there—perhaps monsieur noticed it—to see a gentleman seated near it with his back turned to me. Not having seen any person for so long I was curious, and stepped softly behind him. I was only inquisitive, and meant no ill; but when I came close I saw he was counting over English bank-notes. I knew the look of them only too well, for my Jacques had sent me such. If I had only these, I thought, I need not starve any longer; and I looked and looked till I could bear it no more. Was it hunger or the devil? I know not; but I sprang forward, and seizing the astonished gentleman by the shoulders, threw him backwards. *Monsieur, monsieur,*" she cried, falling once more on her knees, "I did not mean to kill him, I did not indeed. I only meant to take his money, for I was *so* hungry, *so* hungry, monsieur. Ah, why must he fall with his head against that sharp piece of rock and be dead instantly?"

"What was the gentleman's name?" I asked. "Quick!"

"I don't know, monsieur; his linen was marked 'C. J.,' and that was put on the cross."

There was no longer a doubt that I was facing my uncle's murderer! The intervening years had still more ripened the striking likeness there had always been between us, and the woman had too good cause to remember his face.

"What did you do then?" I demanded.

"I took the money, and found it was far more than I could use in a hundred years, so I buried it here under my floor, under this tile," she said, pointing out the place; "and I thought if ever Jacques came home his old mother would have some money to give him, and then he might care to love her again. So I put all in an earthen jar, and only taking the smallest note for myself, went to X——, changed it for French money, and told the people that I had heard from my Jacques. When I came back, there was that dreadful corpse lying in the sunshine looking so frightful, and I grew alarmed lest anyone should find it, and then ask me if I knew aught about it. I thought it better to prevent that, and trudged all the way back to X——, went to M. le Curé, and told him

that since I had left home the day before there was a man lying quite dead by the cross-roads, that he looked to me as if he had fallen back, hit his head against the rock, and been killed by the blow.

"M. le Curé and the police came back with me and found it all as I said. They pronounced it as an accidental death, and as it was impossible to take the body to X——, it being summer-time, and very hot—it was the 2nd of July, 1861—they buried him there, and put up a plain wood cross. Then they carved 'C. J.' upon it, because that was the mark on the dead man's linen.

"But oh, monsieur ! though I had escaped thus safely, I did not enjoy my wealth. Every day I realized more the enormity of my crime, and this year I thought I could bear it no more, and should have killed myself, had I not remembered that would be a second sin at my door. Then I dug up the papers, and thought I would burn them ; when, looking through the pocket-book they were in, I found a letter, ready directed and stamped. I could only read *Angleterre* on it, and a name beginning with J. I posted this, hoping it was to the rightful owner of the fortune. If he comes here, I thought, I will confess my crime to him, and I buried the money once more. And you have come, monsieur, and I suppose you will kill me."

"I am come !" I said. "The man you murdered was my uncle."

She shivered. "Shall you kill me, monsieur ?"

"Make me a bed for the night," I said. "I must decide your fate in the morning ; I must collect myself."

"Are you not afraid I shall kill you, too ?" she asked, in broken tones.

"No," I replied ; "you have suffered too much for your one murder ; you will not commit another. Nor shall I deliver you into the hands of justice, woman ; you have been punished more than the law can punish you by the stings of your conscience. Die in peace. May God have mercy on your soul ; may He forgive you as I shall strive to do."

She burst into an agony of tears, and sobbed out words of gratitude and remorse.

"Leave me," I said ; "your sight is hateful to me. I have only tried to fulfil my duty in acting as I do towards you."

I retired to bed, but—need I say it?—not to sleep. Who could have slept after such strange revelations ? The next morning I quitted the hut, taking the money with me, and leaving the most abject specimen of womanhood behind, a prey to the reproaches of a guilty conscience, that would be sharper far, and harder to bear, than violent death at the hands of justice. It was not long before I was back in England. I returned with joy inexpressible to my wife, and after all due and necessary legal proceedings took possession of my uncle's wealth.

Vainly have I since pondered over my curious story, and have speculated on and tried to recall the feeling that impelled me to throw up home and appointment, all to go forth in quest of a dream.

DODGING A SHARK.

BY T. E. SOUTHEE.

"I THINK," said the skipper, one morning at breakfast, as we were discussing that meal in the cuddy of the "Calcutta," then at anchor off the mouth of the Ullua—"I think we had better fill in as we go, so I shall send the boats cocoa-nutting. Would you like to go?"

"With all my heart," I replied. "I've never been down among the lagoons, and should like it above all things."

"I'm glad of that," said the skipper; "for I shall not go myself. I'm not ambitious of being stung to death by mosquitoes; but as you have never been down the coast, the novelty will perhaps repay you for the pain."

"I'll run the chance of a stinging," I retorted. "If we get a strong sea-breeze, we may happily escape these little pests; but when do we start?"

"With the land-wind in the morning."

"All right! Who is to go?"

"The stevedore for one, because he knows the coast well; the rest you can choose for yourself."

"Then I shall have Jones for one. He's handy, and cooks well."

During the day I selected the rest of my men, hauled the boats alongside, and got everything ready for a start, which it was arranged should be about three o'clock on the following morning.

Central America is so little known that, without casting any reflection on the reader's geographical knowledge, I may assume that he was not quite clear when I said that the "Calcutta" was at anchor off the mouth of the Ullua, in what part of the globe that river is situated.

Close to the shores of the Gulf of Honduras there is a low level track of land, covered with immense forests, through which runs the Rio Ullua, one of the largest and most majestic streams in that state. This river empties itself into the sea in about 15. 45' N. latitude, and 87° 40' W. longitude. At its mouth is an anchorage, where vessels can ride in comparative safety, and where, during certain months in the year, is collected a large fleet of merchant ships, waiting to be freighted with the mahogany which is cut in the interior, and floated down the river. Among these vessels was the barque "Calcutta," whose cargo was about half completed.

Again, few of my readers will have understood what the skipper meant by "filling in," or the necessity of procuring cocoa-nuts for that purpose. I must, therefore, explain that in loading ships with mahogany,

there are spaces between the ends of the logs, and the fore and after parts of the ship, which, to prevent the logs from shifting when the ship is at sea, are filled with cocoa-nuts. It was to procure a supply of nuts for this purpose that I and Peter Byrnes, the stevedore, with ten men and three boys, started on that August morning. As it was late in the season, and all the nuts within a short distance of the river's mouth had been gathered, our destination was one of the lagoons to the eastward of Punta de Sal, or as we should call it in English, Salt Point, about twelve or fifteen miles along the coast.

We "knocked out" at half-past two; and though, overnight, everyone had looked forward to it as a pleasant trip, there was no small amount of grumbling when the time came for turning out; indeed, I cannot with justice say that, when the steward poked his head into my berth to call me, I gave him a very courteous reception. I ceased to grumble, however, when I got on deck, for the extraordinary beauty of the scene which met my view amply repaid me for my broken slumber.

It was one of Nature's most glorious pictures. Above, a world of luminous stars spangled the firmament, all of which were reflected with extraordinary fidelity and brilliancy in the calm blue waters. The ship seemed floating on a sea of stars. This, however, was not all. The moon had just disappeared in the west, leaving behind her a streak of bright light, which still clung to the horizon, showing distinctly the undulations of the ground-swell in the offing, as sharply defined as if they had been cut out of paper, and pasted against the sky.

The men were told off into the boats, and we pushed off. What an extraordinary feeling is that which those in a boat experience when at night they sail away from a large ship! The boat appears to be stationary, while the great black hull and the tall masts seem to melt away and disappear. All this I experienced as we left the old "Calcutta" at her anchorage; but very soon the rippling of the water under the boat's bows dispelled the notion that we were stationary, and an hour afterwards daybreak found us far advanced on our expedition.

About six o'clock, after a good deal of coquetry, the breeze failed us altogether, and we had to take to our oars.

The sea was calm; not a ripple or a flaw broke the glass-like expanse, except, now and again, when a shoal of skip-jacks, scared by the noise of the oars, leaped above the surface, and after skimming the water for a short distance, fell like a glittering shower of silver into the sea again.

I know not if it is so with others, but with me every phase of nature has its peculiar excellency, and the bright and varied panorama which surrounded me, and the beauty of the ocean's bed, called up feelings of both wonder and delight.

No description of mine can give any idea of the crystal purity of the water on which we floated, or the extraordinary and deceptive appear-

ances produced by it. Beneath us were three or four fathoms of water, and yet every rock, patch of sand, and branch of sea-weed, were as distinctly visible to the eye as though we had been looking at them through a piece of glass; indeed, more so, for the transparency of the water seemed to add to their distinctness, while, at the same time, it acted as a magnifier. Such was the wonderful effect produced, that at times rocks and gigantic vegetables appeared floating on the surface, as though to bar our progress; but, as we approached them, they seemed suddenly to sink to the bottom again.

We appeared to be passing over a lovely marine garden, perfectly alive with brilliant-hued fish, which darted about among the weeds and coral branches with a celerity that was quite marvellous. In other places, large and brilliant-coloured star-fish clung to the rocks, while huge craw-fish moved about with the utmost rapidity.

But, after all, description is useless. Had I at my command the glowing language of the poet, or the power of using a pencil dipped in the most vivid and brilliant colours, I could not give any idea, but one that would fall far short of the reality, of the extreme brightness and clearness of the water, and the luxuriance of form and colour which studded that tropical sea.

We had been pulling now for nearly two hours, and a two-hours' stretch at the oar, under a tropical sun, is a thing not to be joked about. It was, therefore, with no small degree of satisfaction that we saw the entrance to Port Sal open on the starboard side, and shortly afterwards we entered the little land-locked cove of that name.

The harbour was a very snug and pleasant spot; but though it is called a port, and for small craft is very commodious, the reader must not suppose it was surrounded by wharves and quays. On the contrary, there was not the least sign of life, except the shoals of monkeys and parrots which came down to welcome us, and screamed and chattered in a most ludicrous manner, as they fluttered among the trees.

Nothing could be lovelier to the eye, weary with the blinding glare of the sun, than the rich green of the waving trees: nothing could be more inviting than the cool shade they afforded. We selected for our encampment a fine spot, clear of brushwood, and yet well shaded, and immediately commenced our arrangements for the night, as we knew that we could not make head against the sea-breeze, which blows on this coast daily with considerable violence.

Port Sal is very difficult of entrance, but, when inside, it is quite a fairy spot. Two high rocky headlands, about fifty fathoms apart, afforded such a shelter as rendered the water of this place, even in the most stormy weather, perfectly smooth and calm. A sandy beach surrounds the harbour, backed by the primeval forest, which, in this instance, grew close to the water's edge.

The bush, as well as the trees, was full of life. When we entered, a

number of large alligators could be seen basking in the sun, or standing side by side on the beach, like a long row of brown soldiers. They all took to the water as we approached; but not understanding why their territory should be thus invaded, they every now and then glided silently up on the sand, shooting their long snouts out of the water, and gazing at us; then, as silently launching themselves backward, they disappeared out of sight. Finding we did not vacate, they swam across the harbour to find another hot place, such as these cold-blooded animals so much delight in. At other places sand-pipers were trotting about in the pools; at the entrance to a creek was a long line of flamingoes; while now and then a great pelican, or booby, flapped heavily across the water, and disappeared through the entrance.

Peter Byrnes, as soon as we landed, started into the bush, taking his gun with him, and had not been gone long, before two or three reports set the whole colony of animals in an uproar. Jones was making himself conspicuous by collecting wood and lighting a fire. Peter soon returned with a monkey or two, and several brace of young macaws and parrots, which Jones at once proceeded to divest of their feathers.

By the joint exertions of these two, our dinner was at last before us; and though not a luxurious one, garnished as it was with hunger, we thought it excellent. The air, the exercise, and that keen sense of animal enjoyment which is to be found in such a life, caused us us to look with complacency, even on roasted parrot and stewed monkey.

Nothing worthy of notice took place until night came on. I had brought a hammock with me, for however beautiful and poetical it may be to recline on a bed of leaves, even though they be of roses, I had a notion that a hammock, slung between two trees, with a blanket to wrap myself in, would be a much more prudent and sensible arrangement. Accordingly, after supper I retired to my hammock, in the hope of passing a comfortable night, for, what with the fatigues of the day and the little rest I had had the previous night, I was dead-beat.

Vain hope! let no man think to have a comfortable night in a tropical forest. Up to eleven o'clock, all was calm and serene, and rolling myself in my blanket, I lay down. Everything for the first hour was still; and I fell asleep watching the fire-flies as they flitted by thousands through the air.

From the most delicious slumber that ever tired man knew, I was awakened by a noise such as I had never heard before; it was, perhaps, the most infernal serenade that ever fell upon human ear. Fancy a conglomeration of the most unearthly and discordant sounds that were ever uttered; but that were vain, for nothing short of hearing it could give any positive notion of the horrible discord that drove sleep from my couch. Thousands of animals, reptiles, and insects seemed to be striving to outdo each other in the production of singular and inhar-

monious sounds. There were howls, groans, roars, and shrieks, accompanied by a chorus of croaking, piping, bellowing, and hooting, varied at intervals by a little scraping, grinding, and saw-sharpening; while, in addition to all this, it appeared as though an army of cats were carrying on an extensive nocturnal performance, in which dissonance was, as usual, a prominent feature. Sometimes there would come a lull; the animals would sink into silence, and the concert would be left to the insects alone; then suddenly the shrill hooting of some night-bird as it darted off into the forest, or the cry of a wild animal from the tree-top, would arouse again the whole catalogue of sounds.*

Towards morning I was dozing, and the animal world, which seemed to be following my example, had almost sunk into silence, when I was aroused by a strong musky smell, that seemed suddenly to pervade the whole encampment. I was not properly awake, but I fancied that some wild animal must be near, and I cautiously looked over the side of the hammock.

The fires, on which we had heaped fuel before retiring to rest, had died down, leaving only a few smouldering embers, which glimmered up occasionally. I could but just see the dusky forms of the men as they lay around me, for the moon had now set behind the mountains; and except where the starlight fell upon the water, or when the flickering light of the fire now and then illuminated the camp, all was black as night. Recalling my scattered senses, and opening my eyes, I cast them along the opening that led to the water. As I did so, I fancied I saw something moving. I could not make out what it was; but it came up slowly and stealthily. At last I perceived that it was of hideous shape, and that it was moving up towards the sleeping seamen.

For a moment I dared not move or speak, for I could not see distinctly enough to make out what it was. At length a portion of the fire gave way, and the unburnt wood falling in among the lighted embers, shot forth a bright flame, and showed me the long gaunt snout of an enormous alligator. I seized my gun, which, fortunately, I had had the precaution to place at the head of my hammock, aimed at its eyes, and pulled the trigger; but the cap only went off. The beast was now close to one of the men; but at the snap of the cap he stood still and listened. I put on another cap, and shook up the priming. By this time the brute had ranged up alongside Peter Byrnes, and was just bending his tail ready for a blow, when I fired.

All hands were up in an instant. One of the boys, in rising, stumbled over the beast, and not knowing what it was, bellowed loudly for help. Meanwhile the struggles of the alligator were terrific, and he was blowing furiously. At last, with an expiring effort, he turned round, and dragging himself down to the water, plunged heavily into it.

* These arose chiefly from a species of monkey known to naturalists as the Howling Monkey.

No sooner had the beast disappeared, than we began to look about us for the boy, but he was nowhere to be seen. I was somewhat puzzled at this. I had heard of alligators dragging their prey into the water, and drowning it ; but that one should do so in his death-throes, and that before our faces, without our perceiving it, appeared marvellous. Still, there was the fact : the boy was gone.

After so tragical an episode, I felt no inclination to sleep, for I could not get the thought of the poor boy out of my head. So I raked together the red embers of the fire, and heaping on more wood, it soon blazed up brightly. Then, filling my pipe, I sat down to think.

At last day dawned, and as the light increased, my surprise was greater than I can describe, to see the boy, whom I fancied had been carried off by the cayman, quietly sleeping in his place among the men. I awoke him, and asked him for an explanation ; but I could get nothing satisfactory from him, except that he had been horribly frightened, ran off he knew not where, and had sneaked back into the camp while I was dozing.

The first ray of the sun found us at sea again. With our sails swelling with a fresh and invigorating breeze, we passed the point and were bowling away towards our destination ; and by six o'clock we entered the mouth of the lagoon.

And now came the aim and object of our expedition—the procuring a supply of cocoa-nuts. In this genial clime the cocoa-nut palm grows to an amazing height, usually from sixty to seventy feet ; but, in some instances, if my eyes did not deceive me, they rose to ninety or a hundred. The whole of the stem is clear, that is, without limb or protuberance, and I may say without bark. At any rate, they have what may be called a smooth round trunk ; consequently it requires no little agility and ingenuity to climb them. This was not to be done by agility alone, as some of our fellows found out ; and here Jones proved himself a man of resource.

It was not the first time he had been cocoa-nutting, and it was soon evident that he understood what he was about. He had brought with him a piece of senit, which the unnautical reader may be informed is a piece of wide flat braid, formed of rope yarns. This he fastened round his ankles, leaving them about ten inches apart ; having tried this contrivance, to see that it was fast, he commenced his ascent. This he did somewhat in the usual fashion by embracing the tree, and then drawing his legs up as high as he could, and pressing the senit band against the trunk of the tree, raised himself bodily ; and thus, alternately raising his body with his hands, drawing his feet up, and pressing the band against the trunk, he ascended with great ease and rapidity.

Peter's skill was now also brought into requisition. He had with him what is termed a strop, a piece of rope, the ends of which were spliced together, forming, when opened, a sort of hempen hoop. Taking this,

doubled, he encircled the trunk of the tree with the two parts of the rope, and passing one bight through the other, he separated the second loop and slipped it over his head and down his body till he could sit in it. Then he began his ascent after the following fashion. First he pushed above his head the part looped round the tree, then planting his feet against the trunk, he raised himself several feet; while doing this he slipped up the noose, and thus worked his way up to the top. There, sitting securely in the loop, he leisurely picked the nuts and dropped them at our feet. Having cleared the tree, he slipped the loop over his head, let the strop fall, and slid rapidly down to the ground.

The only interruption we experienced in procuring our cargo was from an army of monkeys, which came down from the woods to witness our operations. First they came in sixes and sevens, swinging themselves from tree to tree, grinning and chattering at us as we proceeded with our work; but presently they arrived in shoals, headed by an old fellow who seemed a sort of patriarch among them. In the midst of their gambols he seated himself upon a high tree, and they assembled round him; then he appeared to be haranguing them, while they listened with profound attention. Suddenly, as though what he said was excessively comical, they all seemed to be seized with fits of laughter, and swinging from bough to bough, shrieked and chattered as if they had gone mad; the young ones, particularly, were convulsed with hilarity, for they tumbled one over the other, jumping into the air with playful shouts; when you thought they were falling, they dexterously clutched a branch and turned round and grinned at you, as if to enjoy your disappointment. At last, so insolent were they, that they alighted close to the very trees we were picking, and seemed half inclined to make an attack. It was not until I had cooled their courage by a couple of shots that they desisted, and scuttled off into the forest, uttering the most horrible noises.

By eleven o'clock we had succeeded in filling our boats, but it was useless to think of starting till the land-breeze came down, which would be late in the evening or early next morning. All hands, therefore, began to think of making provision for dinner, and the stevedore proceeded to enlighten us as to the mode of fishing in Honduras.

The water in the lagoon, though not so clear as outside, was yet sufficiently so to distinguish the fish as they basked in the sunshine. Accordingly, Peter taking his gear, consisting of a line and spear, got into the gig with a boy, and, pulling out from the shore, let her float. As soon as Peter's practised eye saw a fish swimming near the surface, he launched his spear, and struck it. The moment the stricken fish felt the spike it darted forward with a bound and a jerk; but to understand this method of fishing, I must give a description of these spears.

First, there is a long tapering staff, at the end of which is a barbed spike, secured by a becket to a line, the end of which is fastened to a float, about eighteen inches long, by two in diameter; and round which

the line is wound. The float is attached to one end of the staff, and the spike to the other, but in such a manner that as soon as the fish is struck, the spike is disengaged from one end of the staff, which immediately reverses itself and suffers the cork-float to be also disengaged. The fish darts forward, as I have before observed, as soon as it is struck, and the float being separated from the staff, the line runs off the reel, or float, and when it has all run off, the cork goes bobbing about on the surface in a most curious fashion.

When Peter had struck a fish he took no further notice of it; but went on spearing till he had struck about half a dozen, by which time those he had first caught had ceased their efforts to release themselves, and the floats were stationary. He then commenced to haul in his lines, which was soon done, and when he came on shore we found he had captured six large fish; one of a description I had never before seen. The body was chiefly of a light green on the back, verging into yellow on the belly, variously banded and dotted with black, and the fins and tail spotted with vermillion or bright red, and marked on each side with peacock's eyes. The eye of the fish, which was situated in the middle of the head, was of a clear bright orange, tinged in the upper part with red.

Jones's method of cooking fish was new, and whether he had learned it from the Indians, or stumbled upon it by accident, was conducted according to the most scientific principles. The largest of the fish having been stuffed, was wrapped in leaves and placed in a hole in the sand, which had previously been filled with wood, and was at the time a mass of glowing coals. As soon as the fish was placed therein, it was covered up, and when wanted, was taken out and eaten immediately. A more delicious method of cooking fish I never met with.

Whilst the dinner was being prepared, I proposed to the stevedore that we should take a bath in the lagoon. Peter, however, suggested that it was not safe on account of the alligators; but he said he knew a place outside where we could bathe without fear. Accordingly we took the gig, and though we grounded several times, we succeeded in getting through the narrow channel and reached the place Peter had spoken of.

It was a small, but beautiful basin of water, with a fine clear sandy bottom, enclosed on one side by a bit of beach, while the rest was encircled by a reef of rocks. In some parts the reef was just covered with a sheet of foam, while in others jagged rocks jutted up in huge masses, over which the swell broke with a noise like thunder. Outside the reef there was a stiff breeze blowing, but inside the surface was calm, and the waters clear; though now and then it was curled by a brisk flaw, which rendered more refreshing and enchanting the water of this beautiful inlet.

Not caring to anchor the boat, we undressed, and plunging in, swam

out to the reef. I was enjoying the bath amazingly, floundering about under the lee of the rocks, over which the green seas broke at intervals, half smothering me in a natural shower-bath. The water on the part of the reef on which I stood was scarcely two feet deep, except where the swell came round, and then I was almost taken off my legs, such was the precarious nature of my footing.

I was just waiting for another roller to burst over me, and the stevedore was floating on his back in the centre of the basin, when to my intense horror I saw a large shark making towards him. I cried out loudly "A shark! a shark!"

The stevedore, hearing this terrifying cry, turned to see from whence the danger came. It would have been useless for him to attempt to reach the boat, so I shouted to him to strike out for the shore. For a second or two he seemed fear-stricken, and made no effort to reach the land. Suddenly, he either realized the danger of his position, or he decided upon some plan of escape, for he struck out boldly for the shore. Those few seconds of indecision on the part of Peter had enabled the monster to get into fearful proximity to him, and for some minutes the race was an exciting one. I held my breath and looked on half paralyzed with terror, while foot by foot the shark drew nearer to him; expecting every instant to see its silvery stomach glancing in the sunlight, and the form of the stevedore dragged under water.

Just as the shark was within a few fathoms of him, the stevedore turned sharp round and dived. As his foot disappeared beneath the surface, the monster dashed at it, and there was great commotion in the water. For some seconds the brute lashed his tail, his struggles were terrific, and I thought it was all over with poor Peter. But in another moment or two, to my inexpressible joy, I saw his head emerge from the water, some distance from the shark, and a cry of thankfulness escaped me as I saw him reach the shore in safety.

Meanwhile the shark had released himself from the shoal; for I now saw that Peter, who knew the place well, had availed himself of his knowledge, and dexterously avoiding it, had put the shark aground upon a spit of sand that ran out from the shore.

No sooner did the brute clear the shoal than he made for the reef. I had been so occupied with the stevedore's danger that I had not thought of myself. When I did, the great black fin was sailing down rapidly towards me. To enable the reader to realize my situation more fully, I may say that the boat was floating gaily in the middle of the inlet, and was thus of no service, either to Peter or me. Thus, while, on the one hand, my return was effectually cut off by the shark, I could not hope for any assistance from the shore. It is true, the danger was not so imminent as in the case of the stevedore, but my position was, nevertheless, one of extreme peril, and one from which I could see no means of escape.

Some horrible instinct seemed to have enabled this monster to scent me; for a few minutes after Peter's retreat he was floating close to me, gazing at me with his hideous eyes, and looking as though he was only waiting for a favourable opportunity to seize me. Death, painful and horrible, stared me in the face, and I could do nothing to escape from it.

I had retreated on to the highest part of the reef; but the position afforded little extra security, for when the rollers swept over it I was several times knocked off my feet, and once nearly precipitated into the very jaws of the shark.

I remained for some time in fearful suspense, half paralyzed with terror, and uncertain what to do. The boat was pursuing a most erratic course, now carried one way, and now another, by the opposite currents of air. At one time it seemed floating towards me, and my spirits began to revive; but as soon as it got under the lee of the rocks it advanced no farther, only bobbing and dancing before me, as if to cheat me with vain hopes. Then suddenly another flaw seized it, and carried it once more into the centre of the inlet. One time I thought of attempting to reach the point by wading across the reef; but I was uncertain as to the depth, and I feared when I got quite from under the lee of the high rocks the rollers would be too strong for me, so that idea was dismissed.

I could not keep my eyes from my terrible companion, which had continued to float almost motionless in the clear water before me. His eyes, dull and flaccid, yet so ferocious, seemed to follow my every movement. At intervals, as if to delude me, he would gradually fade away, sinking slowly, and without any motion of his body, till he almost disappeared from sight, and then, without any perceptible effort, rose again like a cork to the surface. There he lay like a cat pretending to sleep, yet never taking its glance from its prey.

The tension of the muscles was so great to keep my footing, and I had been so long in the water, that I felt my strength could not last much longer, and I expected every minute to be swept from the reef. All hope, therefore, of escape, as far as any active measure on my part was concerned, was gone,—my trust was now in God; I could do nothing, but await His will.

From this state of despondency I was awakened by a shout, and the next instant I was hauled into the boat.

What became of my enemy, or how I got clear of the inlet, I have no very definite idea. All I know is that, making a bold dash, Peter succeeded in reaching the boat, and rescuing me. We were not long in dressing, and soon got back to the lagoon; and though only half an hour previous I had expected to be food for a shark, the idea had not taken away my appetite, for I enjoyed my dinner as well as if nothing had happened.

After dinner we lit our pipes, and reclining upon the green and leafy sward, I mused on my situation. Nothing, perhaps, could be more romantic. The scene was a wild one; and, as I gazed into the dark and solemn forests, that stretched for hundreds of miles along the coast, and extended an unknown distance into the interior, I felt my heart dilate, and my pulse beat strong, as I thought of their mysterious depth, vast extent, and the immense variety of animal and vegetable life they contained.

Nothing strikes a European more forcibly when he first sees a tropical forest than the gigantic growth of its vegetable productions. But what, after a time, surprises him more than anything, is to find himself living, as it were, in a perpetual spring, with a continuous and never-ending harvest. It is not only surprising to him that Nature is able to sustain such immense, and, it would almost appear, prodigal demands upon her vital energies—producing, as she does, the most beautiful things, in the most wonderful profusion; but that she does this unaided by man, almost without intermission, and without any appearance of exhaustion or decadence of power.

To my mind, there is no part of the world which gives the traveller a grander idea of nature than Central America. No one who has ever seen her glorious forests, her picturesque streams, and her forest-clad, cloud-capped mountains, has ever come back disappointed. As far as I am individually concerned, I can say truly, that a week of the life one is obliged to adopt in the bush is worth years of ordinary existence.

In the evening we embarked, taking, in addition to our load of ripe nuts, a number of unripe ones, or, as they are called, jelly-nuts. With regard to these, the fluid they contain is the most delicious drink I ever came across, particularly if you add to the liquor a dash of old rum. It is the more pleasant on account of its coolness, for even if the nuts are picked in the heat of the day, the fluid is as cold as though it had been iced. How Peter and I revelled in this cocoa-nut sangaree; how we laughed at the dangers we had so narrowly escaped; or how many pipes we smoked, the reader must not expect to know. All I shall say with regard to our return is, that with a fair breeze, after camping for the night in Port Sal, we reached the ship in safety the next afternoon.



NELLY DEVITT'S GHOST.

EVERYBODY blamed me when I married my good man, because he was a sailor, and gay and thoughtless in his way, and I left a comfortable service to join my fortunes with his, for better or for worse. I was an orphan, and had been brought up in the Wyndhurst family, as a sort of waiting-maid to the young lady; my mother before me had served her mother, and the place was like home to me.

My husband was the keeper's son, and we had been boy and girl sweethearts before he ever went to sea at all; so I didn't mind what people said, but when the family at the Hall made up their minds to go abroad, and I saw that Miss Helen would get along better in foreign parts with a stylish French maid to wait on her, I just said yes to Will Catherwood, and we were married the night before he sailed on his first voyage as mate of the "Mermaid."

We lived on the Cornish coast, and I could see his ship come into harbour from the window of the little cottage on the cliff, to which he brought me as his wife. I was very happy, and so was he, for a better, truer husband than my Will no woman ever was blessed with.

Will's money wasn't much when he got it, and he was such a noble, generous-hearted fellow that, while he had a penny left, he never could say no to any one in trouble; so it was as little as I could do to help him by setting up a little shop with a few pounds I had saved before we were married.

It was only amusement to me, Will being so much away; and when my elder sister died, and left me her orphan daughter to care for, I was glad that I had the chance to do it, without calling on poor Will for the means to do it with.

My niece's name was Jane Lewis. She was a good, reliable girl, and a great help to me. She has married well, and is living in the old country still; but as it was owing to her that we got mixed up with the strange doings I'm going to tell you about, I must describe her to you. She was nearly twelve when she came to live at our place; and my oldest boy was not quite two years old then. She began to be of use at once, and lightened my cares from the very day of our being together. A good-hearted, sensible child, ready and willing to help, and with judgment beyond her years in everything. Said she to me one day, after we had been four or five years together—"Aunt Susan, why don't you get Uncle Will to bring you oranges and grapes enough to sell in the shop? The ladies have come back to the Hall, and they're having

company all the time. Such things would sell well, I'm sure, if you'd move a little farther up in the town, and keep a good supply."

Now this was quite an idea, and I soon saw the good sense of it. Will was just leaving on a Lisbon voyage, and I talked it over with him. He saw the sense of it, too, and promised to bring me a stock of fruits when he came back in a month or six weeks.

But the trouble was to get a house, with good shop-room, convenient to the Hall and the better-class dwellings that were near it. Jane and I knew every house in the town, and there was not a single one empty that we could afford to take. We talked it over, and wondered what we should do, till at last Jane cried out—"Why, Aunt Susan, there's the old Devitt house, just the thing we want, and I warrant we can get it cheap enough, too; for it has stood idle, going to rack and ruin, this many a year."

"The Devitt house," said I, and I stopped to think a bit; for, to tell you the truth, the mention of it rather startled me. Everybody said it was haunted, and no one would live in it rent-free. Nearly ten years before, old Devitt died there, the last of his family, and after that it was shut up, and left to the rats and cobwebs. To be sure, it was, as Jane said, the very thing we needed; for old Devitt had been a baker, and used the ground-floor for his shop and bake-rooms; besides, it had quite a good bit of yard for the children to play in, with plenty of chamber-room for a family twice our size.

"It is a good house, in a good situation," said I, as I thought of all this; "but you know, Jane, people talk of it. I don't believe there is a soul in all Wyndhurst that could be hired to live there."

"That's the reason we shall get it at a bargain," returned Jane, stoutly. "If we mean to keep a fruit-shop, it is the very place for us."

I'm not a coward myself, and I never believed in any of the foolish stories they had got up about the old place. I knew the sorrowful story of the family that had lived there last, and I attributed most of the talk about the white figure they had seen flitting through the upper rooms to the pitiful ending of poor Nelly Devitt's life as a hopeless maniac in those very chambers. You see, the Devitts were comfortable sort of people, with two or three sons and this one daughter, Nelly, of whom they were foolishly fond and proud. She was very pretty, but her beauty brought her no good, poor thing! for she fell into disgrace, and was sent away to the north to her mother's friends; for the Devitts were very high in their notions, and strove to hide the shame that her folly had brought upon them.

Such things can't be kept hidden, it seems, and so this was soon the town-talk. Old Lady Wyndhurst had a grandson, the only male heir of all the grand estate, and it was through him and his deceiving promises poor Nelly had been brought to ruin, they said.

The young gentleman had gone, no one knew where, and the brothers of the deserted girl were tracking him, thirsting for his life.

I was only a little girl when it all happened, but living at the Hall, I heard many a whisper of it, and saw more of the troubles than I could well understand, then. The old lady, as we called her, was nearly wild about it, and all the servants said it was a shame for her to uphold him in his wrong-doing, and try so hard to mislead the Devitts, who were searching for him. The old man had come to the Hall at the first, and had a long interview with her, which ended by both being in a towering passion, and loud words of bitterness and anger were overheard by the servants.

I heard the butler say, afterwards, that she offered the wretched father money, which he wrathfully refused, demanding that his poor girl should be righted by marriage; at which the old lady laughed scornfully.

"Do you know what you are, my good man, and to whom you speak?" she asked; and then she told him to act like a good tenant and sensible man, and take what she offered him, and go away quietly.

They said he cursed the whole set till he lost his voice with rage, and went away, white and speechless, to his wretched home.

After that the family began to break up at the bakery. First the mother died—of grieving, it was thought; and then the older boy was lost in a storm on the bay. He had a boat of his own, and after the trouble grew very rash, venturing out in all weathers.

The second son went abroad, in the hope of finding young Wyndhurst, and died of a fever in some foreign place, leaving the youngest, a mere lad, at home with his father.

About this time, they brought Nelly back and tried to keep her secretly; but it came out, before long, that she was crazy; and when people heard strange wailing cries in the dead of night, they said it was Nelly Devitt in her madness, lamenting over the desolation her folly had brought.

Poor thing! it was a bitter penance for wrong-doing, and many a long year she paid it, raving and moaning away her poor withered life behind the barred windows of her unhappy home.

The youngest boy was like his mother in looks, and they must have been alike in nature, too; for as soon as he grew old enough to understand his family's misfortunes, he just grieved and drooped, as she had done, till they laid him beside her in the grave.

The old man lived on, held in life by the care of the helpless creature who had deprived it of every charm for him. People used to say that he grew daily harder and harsher in his ways, until at last every one was afraid to go near him; and so they lived alone till the end, the lunatic and he; and truly it seemed that he was kept with her

as long as she needed his care, for a week after she died, he followed her to the grave, and, as I have said, the old place was shut up and deserted.

But I must not forget to tell you what none of our keenest gossips had found out before old Devitt's death disclosed it to them. Nelly had a little daughter, born and brought up among her mother's people; to whom the old man left the little that remained of his savings, with the injunction that she should never come near Wyndhurst, but stay in the place of her birth till the end of her days.

It was not long after this that the old lady died. She made a miserable end of it, I'm told; for I was not often at the Hall myself in those days. I had just got married, and was full of my housekeeping cares; besides, the housekeeper did not encourage much coming and going in the servants' hall, for the old lady seemed "breaking up," as they called it, and she was often taken with fits of screaming and horror that frightened those who had to wait on her, and they didn't want to have it talked over in the town. Her grandson had died abroad years before, and there was nobody but the ladies left to keep up the family honours. It was to these ladies the Devitt house belonged as a part of the Wyndhurst property; but when Jane talked me into the notion of renting it, it was to their agent I went. He was an old man, an attorney, very sharp in money matters. No one had ever come after the place, to try and rent it, all these years; yet as soon as he saw that I was willing to take it, he put on a serious business face, and began to talk about its value and the advantages of its location.

"Now, Mr. Willet," says I, "you know as well as I do that the place has a bad name; that there isn't a man, woman, or child, in Wyndhurst that would live in it for a gift, except it be myself. If you've a mind to let me have the place for the taxes and water-rate, I'll take it and clean it and put it in order, which will be a heavy job, to judge from the looks of it."

He hemmed and hawed, and talked of the bargain I was making, for a while, and at last gave me a five years' lease, which, to tell you the truth, I was almost afraid to take. If I had it to do over again, I would have left the lease in Mr. Willet's office rather than bound myself as a tenant when I came to see the wretched-looking place it was, choked up with dirt and dust, and shut out from light by the broken boards that were nailed across its broken windows.

But soap and water, and brooms and brushes, did more towards reconciling me to my new possession than all Mr. Willet's congratulations on my cheap rent. Jane and I went to work with a will, and as soon as the glaziers had supplied the places of the broken lights, we polished the glass and scoured the floors and window-frames, till, as Jenny said, we got the haunted-look off things.

It was a large house—far too large for us; but we thought it was

better to have too much than too little, and having swept and dusted the upper floor nicely, we closed it up entirely, contenting ourselves with the abundant accommodations of the two lower stories. There were three good rooms besides the front and back shop, and we had plenty of space to spread ourselves over in the day-time, reserving the two front chambers above for sleeping-rooms, and the smaller back chambers as store-rooms to hang our clothes in, or put away anything that was not in use.

We put the shop in order to begin with, and made the most of our small stock of fruit and sweetmeats, till Will should return with a full supply ; then we fitted up the back room as a sort of little parlour, with our best things, and sat there when our work was over, and nothing to do but mind the shop. We had a good many calls at once from the Hall, for the ladies there had been very anxious to do away with the stories about the Devitt house being haunted, and seemed glad to help us with their custom. This was the first week of our being there, and as neither sight nor sound had disturbed us, we laughed at the inquiries of the towns-people who looked so disappointed to hear that there was no trouble.

"I'm glad on Uncle Will's account," said Jane, when we had been there nearly a fortnight, and were looking for him to come home in a few days. "Uncle Will is so good-humoured and cheerful, it would be a pity to cloud his return with any gloomy experiences. We are so comfortable, he'll never remember a word about the reports they used to have of ghosts, and cries, and moans, and all that."

It happened to be on a Friday evening in October, a little before Hallowe'en, that Jenny said this, and we were sitting round the lighted lamp in the back shop, just after supper. The two elder children were playing with the baby, and Jenny and I were looking over the winter things, patching and piecing against the cold weather. Besides the double glass-doors, which were open, the room had two other entrances, one going out into the hall, the other opening on the best kitchen. Scarcely had she ceased speaking, when the handle turned in the first of these, and the door opened wide, bringing a draught of cool air with it that made the flame shake in the lamp-shade, blew down some paper pictures the children were arranging on the table, and startled us all.

I could not help feeling sure there was some one in the hall ; so I went out quickly, quite expecting to see them. I believe the emptiness of the place frightened me more than anything I could have seen ; for about a second my heart stood still, and I could not breathe. After that I collected my thoughts, and though I was disturbed and troubled by what followed, it never completely upset me again.

"The draught comes from the cellar-door, Jane," said I, as soon as I had my wits about me. "It's very strong, and the latch on this door is weak."

I took hold of the knob to close it again, when I felt it pulled out of my hand as plainly as if I had seen the one who did it. Jenny saw it too, and the same feeling came to her and me at the same moment—a desire to save the children from fright; so she called them to her, and busied them about their pictures, still keeping an anxious eye directed towards me.

Will says I've a good temper, and I am happy that he has found it so, for it's to his own credit as much as mine; but I believe I've a sharp will of my own, and I know it came to my aid when I found that unseen force resisting me. I just said to myself, "I will shut it in Heaven's name!" and it closed with a bang.

Then I made haste to lock it, and came and sat down as quietly as I could and took up my sewing. All was still for a while, and then came three measured raps that paused a moment before they were repeated.

I did not rise, so my eldest boy said, in surprise:

"Somebody's knocking; don't you hear, Jenny?"

I don't know what I expected to see, but I do know that I was not afraid on my own account; if the children had been away, I believe I should have courted an encounter with whatever power it was that was at work to our annoyance.

"It is some bad boys trying to bother us," said Jenny; "but we won't mind them, will we? We'll just say our prayers and be good ourselves, and then nothing can worry us or disturb us."

Poor Jenny was frightened; I could see that at a glance, for her face was as white as her dimity apron, and her eyes were large and round. I think I was uncomfortable myself, but I took thought and recalled my wits about me.

"There is no evil that can harm us, unless we give it power over us," I said to myself; and I got up and went to the door.

"Go along with you, you bad creature," said I; "don't you know that we are poor people, who try to serve God and do our duty without giving offence to any? In the Lord's name, be gone, and leave us in peace!"

After that we waited awhile, and no other sound came; so, lest the children should discover our excitement, we got ready leisurely, and closing the shop, went up to bed. There was not another sound that night, and I think Jenny and I both lay awake till daylight, listening if we could discover any.

The next morning we felt so much more courageous than we had done the night before, that we were inclined to laugh at our fears as imaginary. Jenny said after all she believed we could explain the whole thing to be caused by the wind and a loose shutter.

But as evening drew on, I saw that she looked timid, and I'm afraid I felt a little so myself, although I reasoned that no harm could happen to me or mine.

Will had a book, called "Captain Riley's Narrative," that was very interesting, and Jenny had spent many an hour over it of winter nights.

"Get Captain Riley, and let us have some of it, Jenny," said I; "I'll sew while you read, and the children can have their blocks to play with."

"All right," cried Jenny; and she ran up to fetch the book, leaving me and the children without a light, except the fire-glow. She sang as she went, for the sake of company, and the pleasant sound of her voice came down the stairs as she bustled about, searching for Captain Riley. I was sitting with the baby on my lap, and my back to the door, and the sound ceased while footsteps began slowly to descend the staircase. Jane was a quick, impatient walker, and this was a slow, soft, regular sound, that came pit-a-pat till it reached my side. I looked up, expecting to see her, book in her hand.

I cannot tell you how I felt when I saw nothing but the shadows that the fire-light could not scatter. The next instant she came flying down, breathless and white, the lamp shaking so much that its flame was nearly out.

"What is the matter?" cried I; but the next minute I remembered the children, rose up quietly, took the lamp from her hand, and shut the door, still holding the baby in my arms.

She had the book, which she clutched unconsciously in her trembling hands; but she dropped into a chair without opening it, or seeming able to recover from her alarm.

"There was a strange lady up-stairs to-day," said Willie, my eldest boy, as if he had just remembered it, "and she seemed so odd! Did she come down here?"

"Where was she, and what did she do?" I asked, keeping my eye on Jenny, who was trying hard to gather her senses about her.

"She walked round and round, and seemed looking for something," said Willie. "She was a very strange lady, and her hair was all wild."

"Poor thing!" says I; but it took quite an effort to say it quietly. "She strayed in here, and can do harm to no one. God will take care of us, and we need not be afraid."

"That is true," said Jenny, recovering her composure; "it is very foolish to be frightened at nothing. I think we had better read the Bible to-night, Aunt Susan, instead of Captain Riley; don't you?"

I was very ready to hear the Bible, for there's nothing so calming to the feelings as a good chapter. I've lived long enough in the world to know something about its troubles; and this I'll say, that I've never met with a sorrow or a burden that it didn't help me to bear. So we had two or three chapters, which Jenny tried hard to read distinctly, but without succeeding as well as usual. Do what I would, I could not listen with undivided attention, since I was all the time fancying I heard the soft footsteps repeating themselves on the floor beside me. They

did not come again, and the children fell asleep listening to Jenny's voice. I got up and put them comfortably in their chairs. Then Jenny stopped reading, and began, in a low, frightened voice—"Aunt Susan, there's something dreadful in this house: there really is. I never knew I was such a fearful coward as I proved to-night."

I tried to make light of her fears, and she went on to tell me that on going into the room over the kitchen, where we kept the few books we had, she found the door open and the moon shining so brightly into the window that she scarcely needed the lamp she carried. All at once she became aware of some one passing her with a light, quick step, and turning about just as she laid her hand on the book, she saw the dim outline of a shape pass through the door and down the staircase. She could not be mistaken, she said over and over again; and she shuddered at her own certainty.

I said all I could say, but it seemed very little when I had done. I told her that we had harmed or wronged no one, and had no need to fear; and then I said learned and wise people had been deceived by their own fears, and might not we?

So we went to bed when the time came, if not bravely at least quietly, but neither of us managed to rest much.

Jane didn't make any noise, but I knew by her breathing that she was awake, and somehow there didn't seem the least use in my trying to sleep.

The clock began to strike, and stopped; I thought it must be near morning, but it was only one, and a singular sound commenced in the next room the moment the hour sounded. It was a scraping, pounding sort of noise, as if some one was laying a hearth and scraping away the mortar used, and this kept up incessantly for a time; at length it ceased, and Jane's frightened voice whispered—"Aunt Susan, what was that?"

"I don't know," says I, "but I've heard it before, and it never brought us any harm or trouble."

So I had, often in the first week of our being there, discovered such a scratching kind of sound, and called it rats; but this night I did not feel able to control my feelings. I could not reason about it, but just lay still, feeling rather uncomfortable, and saying nothing.

I think I must have fallen asleep by-and-by, for the sun was bright and clear when I sprang up, and Jane and the children were dressed and gone down.

Somehow I felt that I had no right to think of myself in the matter, but that if Jenny and the children could be kept from the knowledge of these strange things, I could go on very well.

The store proved itself to be a success, for the Hall people patronized me to a wonderful extent; so did the people on the Terrace, and the summer cottages in the Grove.

If it had not been that we were kept so busy all day, I don't believe

we could have endured it ; but it was only at twilight that we got time to think, and then the trouble began.

It was never the same twice in succession. Sometimes it would be steps up and down all the evening, while at others it would only be soft little knocks overhead, or the door-handles turning as if some one were coming in who never entered.

The children grew accustomed to it without being at all afraid. "There's the noise," Willy would say, "and I saw the strange lady to-day."

But although the child persisted that he had seen a woman with a distracted face and flowing hair, I never once was aware of an appearance of any kind in my presence ; and Jenny, after her first fright, never saw anything again.

Will's voyage was strangely prolonged. We were very uneasy at first, but I inquired of the shippers, and they explained to me that the "Mermaid" was to stop at a French port, which caused the delay ; and somehow I felt glad that we had a chance to fight out our troubles alone, for Will was not patient, and he would have been likely to give in at once and leave the place.

As nearly as I can remember, it was about a month from first to last, and in all that time we never had one quiet night, though after the first fortnight Jenny seemed to get entirely over her dread of the sounds, and sleep as comfortably as if she never heard them. I could not. Somehow there was an indescribable something about them that set my heart beating at the first tap ; and yet I daily gained strength to think more and more, and reason about them with myself.

We had but few intimates, partly owing to my being so busy, partly to the little fancy I had for gossip and silly talk. Many a one asked me if we were not carried off by the ghosts, and other silly things ; but I always gave a merry kind of answer, that had no more sense than their questions, and kept my own counsel. So did Jenny. There was something in it, I felt sure, for we could not doubt both eyes and ears—but what was it ? I asked myself till I grew tired, and could get no satisfaction ; seeing that Jenny was getting used to it, I did not want to frighten her again by reviving the subject, so I kept it to myself. "It must be something that will bear explaining," says I to myself ; "it comes from one quarter, and however it varies, it returns again and again to that scraping, scratching sound. What does it mean ?"

That was a question more easily asked than answered. I kept repeating it as I worked, until the idea came into my mind to make a search.

I told you that a nice little back chamber over the kitchen was where Jenny thought she saw the figure. We used to keep books and things there, but Jenny soon cleared it out, and shut it up, leaving it to the sole occupation of the sound that scratched, and tapped, and walked

there so industriously all night long. That was where I began on a bright, sunshiny winter day to make my search. Not a scratch or spot was discernible in all the room; the bricks were bright and red, as if freshly painted; the plaster was clean and smooth; not a speck to be seen anywhere. The other rooms had never a sound in them, yet I went up stairs to the broad upper chamber where poor Nelly Devitt raved her life away, and there, strange to say, the hearth was scratched and the bricks displaced. I had never noticed it particularly, before, but now I saw that every brick had been removed from its place separately, and only replaced at random.

I thought I had found out at last the great question—what does it mean? and hastily took them all out to search beneath them. I found nothing—not even a scrap or shred of anything; and so, after examining every crack and crevice of the whole place from garret to cellar, I gave it up—and the sounds went on. Fainter and fainter every night, it seemed to me, or else I was becoming used to it. I cannot tell exactly how that may be, but I know that I was only hoping and praying that they might disappear altogether before Will's return—for he was gone now over two months.

But his ship came in one morning, and word was brought to us that it was in the bay. I can't tell you how happy I was; and Jenny was almost as glad as I. Both together we fairly danced for joy, when a lad came up from the first boat that came ashore to say that Will had a better offer from a Liverpool captain, and had sent me the fruit he promised, with his best love; but I was not to expect to see him for three months, for he had gone over to America, and would bring me back a purse of gold. I don't believe all the gold that ever was coined could have paid me for the bitter pain and disappointment this news gave me. I felt sick at heart, and it may be my mind was a little troubled with what I had heard in the old house; but this blow just knocked me over.

Jane unpacked the fruit, and was so busy selling and putting up packages that she had no time to sympathize with me; I was fit for nothing, and could only wander about the house, trying to work, with the heart taken out of it.

That night I lay awake crying silently, for I was sorely afraid that America would ruin my poor Will, I had seen so much of its doings on gay, good-hearted fellows like him. I don't believe I thought of the noises at all, but I remembered afterwards that there was not a sound in the house but the children's breathing.

When daylight came, I was glad to get up and go down stairs without making a stir to rouse the rest, for I felt better moving about than lying still, grieving. There was no water in the house, and before I made the fire, I took the pail and ran down to the well for it.

I should have told you about this well. It was a curious old place,

on the very edge of our lot, close to the low hedge that divided a Wyndhurst field from ours. Willow bushes grew thick around it, and the ruin was cushioned with velvet mosses. I had just heard that young Wyndhurst used to meet poor Nelly Devitt there in times gone by, and that his lynx-eyed old grandmother found out their secret by discovering them together at this trysting-spot.

I'm sure there was no thought of this in my mind this morning. To tell you the truth, I was far too much concerned about my own poor Will to be troubled about the sorrows of the dead and gone; but as surely as I ever saw her in all my life, there stood old Lady Wyndhurst among the willows at the side of the well, leaning on her gold-headed stick, and looking forward, as if waiting for me.

I have been told since then that it was my fancy and the excited state of my mind which caused me to imagine that I saw her; and I'm very willing to allow that it was so; but what seems odd to me is this, that she looked so natural. I was so completely taken by surprise that I believe I had half curtsied in saluting her, when a sudden fear rooted me to the spot.

She was a sharp-faced old woman, wrinkled and cunning, and she peered at me with the same hard, suspicious look I'd seen her wear all the years I served in her household. She used to have stiff rustling silks, that shook as she walked, and made a sound by which we always knew she was coming. I seemed to hear the same noise now, and she came close to where I stood, rooted to the ground, and, looking over my head, pointed, as it seemed to me, to the back end of our house, to the little room over the kitchen.

I believe I turned my head in obedience to her motion, and when I looked again, she was gone. My knees smote together, and I had not strength to crawl back to the house; for an hour or two afterwards, Jenny found me sitting in the shade under some bare elder bushes, shivering and light-headed, with a strong fever coming on me.

I was ill for three long weeks after that, and poor Jenny must have had her hands full: for most of the time I was out of my wits, and raving all kinds of nonsense. But the odd part came after that, and if there was anything in the whole matter, it ended there, since neither sight nor sound out of the common was ever more known in old Devitt's house. I lived in it nearly twenty years myself, and I knew them that came after me, for it was Jenny's self, and she's there to this day to say the same.

I was sitting up in my own room, for the first time, and was very weak, considering the care I had, when I heard Willie and his little sister quarrelling and fretting with each other, and called them to me to settle the dispute. It was all about a piece of paper that Willie had found under a loose brick in the hearth in the little room.

"It came up easy," he said, as I held the scrap in my hand, "I

didn't break it or scratch it, and this was folded under it ; and it's mine, because I found it."

Something like a great light flashing before my eyes, almost blinded me as I held it up and tried to read the words it contained. It was a marriage certificate, and proclaimed that Nelly Devitt was the wife of Wyndhurst's heir !

On the back of it, in trembling letters, were these words :—" I have sworn to Lady Wyndhurst to show this to no living creature, or she will disinherit her grandson, my husband. I put it here, trusting in Heaven's mercy it may be found, for the sake of my unborn child."

It was not long before I got strength enough to put this in a good lawyer's hands ; and before I had done being nursed and petted by my faithful Jenny, Nelly Devitt's child was at Wyndhurst, acknowledged by her father's people.

I've heard since, that in her madness the poor mother scratched day and night at the bricks in the room she was confined in ; but all I know is, they looked as if they had been scraped for years, yet gave me no clue to the secret they suggested.

My Will came back all right ; and Willie got a good start in life from Miss Helen Wyndhurst, as the great lady who was once poor Nelly's child, is called. So that's the story as far as it goes. I was frightened at the time, but it's like a dream to me now.



FLOWERS.

UNDER the brown of the old year's leaves,
Under the shadow of budding trees,

The spring flowers grow.

Along the hedge, by the running brook,
We found them in many a walk we took,
We children, long ago.

They have passed away, those first fair years,
And with them our childish joys and fears ;

But the scent of the flowers
That we loved is the same, and as sweet
As when we gathered them under our feet
In that spring-time of ours.

OUR LOG-BOOK.

CRITICS have long had a bad repute for dipping into the mass of books that come in their way rather than in any sense reading them. Perhaps Sydney Smith's grimly-humorous advice to a brother critic—never to read a book before reviewing it because this prejudiced one so much—was generalized from wider data than might be suspected from looking over the pages of reviews. And we must plead guilty to the common weakness, only our circumstances are peculiar. Many books we merely dip into ; but these, from our limited space, we are compelled to pass aside ; so that we must confess to being perforce "prejudiced" critics. But it is pleasant when the reading, which "prejudices one so much," makes it a prejudice of favour and liking. This is our feeling towards "The Pretty Widow" of Mr. Ross. It is a story of rare merits, and all the more that its merits are not of an obtrusive kind. Mr. Ross has apparently studied to make his work a faithful reflection of contrasted characters he has met with in life ; and his plot, though sufficient to maintain interest, and to aid the development of character, seems to have been consciously kept in due subordination. Yet in a truly workmanlike spirit he has not scrupled to use little points well fitted to stir and quicken the plot-interest, which it is more than probable the mere plot-seeker would have missed. Life itself is most fertile of surprises, of revelations, of inexplicable coincidences. Mr. Ross's faithfulness to life in many respects has helped his plot, as it must always do ; for circumstances, whether simple or involved, in the hand of the artist, only exist and have real value as they throw light on personal tendencies and possibilities—in one word, on character. And it is a very remarkable feature of this novel, that the whole tone of the dialogue is kept studiously low, uncoloured by any kind of craving for effect on the writer's part, his characters being made to interpret themselves naturally through the common atmosphere into which they are thrown, and that, for the most part, with fine gradation and faithfully pauseful development. And this suggests a point worthy of notice. The lower the art is, there is the more determination to sharply separate the characters from each other by hard forcefulness of the words put into their mouths ; while predominating traits are lost in separate details, and the unity which should unfold itself gradually is constantly thrust upon us abruptly through the intellect. This is the difference, for instance, between the "London Journal" and George Eliot, or Thackeray. And yet Thackeray's too-consciously over-ruling doctrine—that men

essentially differ very little from each other—led him, by the very necessity he was under of interesting his readers, to seek *revealing* differences of personality through putting into the mouths of his characters remarks which were utterly untrue to them *as being expressed by them*. Becky Sharp is made to say herself what no Becky in real life would herself have said; and hence the assertion we often hear, that Becky Sharp is an impossibly wicked character. She is no more impossible than Colonel Newcome is as a good character, though both are doubtful and unreal, through being made mere mediums of confession, and all on one side. But Mr. Ross is faithful to his characters in reserving much on their behalf, and making the story, as a whole, reveal a very great deal about all the types he brings before us. Here, as in life, men are mirrors through which they read each other. This reserve, sometimes amounting almost to a commonplace coldness, in some of Mr. Ross's most exquisite turns of dialogue, has reminded us a little of Houssaye. We do not mean by this that there is anything borrowed or suggested. Mr. Ross may not even have read the brilliant *nouvelettes* of that author. But there is now and then the same seemingly unimportant, yet clear and sharply-curved lines of conversation, supporting and carrying over a peculiar current of impassioned suggestion, deepening sometimes, through very simplicity, into tragic fullness; while yet the dialogue itself seems to stand out, distinct and clear, from the element which, unexpressed, gives to it its whole value. Even when you are most moved to laughter by the abrupt irrelevancies, the awkwardnesses or puzzled constraints of the characters—as of poor Polyblank in his first meeting with the Baroness, and, indeed, in most of his contact with her—you are caught in the very midst of that laughter by a peculiar pathos that throbs through it upon you with inexpressible effect. That conversation between the Baroness and Mr. Raynal about the cigar-case, within hearing of poor Polyblank, is perhaps the best specimen of this in the book.

The ground-work of the story, as we have said, is simple, yet it has excellent elements, naturally wrought out. An old miserly baron gets enamoured of Floreska, a young actress, and by enlisting the aid of a greedy, interested mother, succeeds in marrying her. He dies soon thereafter, leaving her with an income of 3,000*l.* a year. Living in the grand château on her estate, she is inexpressibly lonely, and is fain to find relief in obeying the promptings of her heart by visiting the poor and sick near her—her companion, Dubosq, being a fine offset. One day she meets with poor Polyblank, the simple awkward usher in the Imperial Academy, trespassing on her grounds. Notwithstanding the ludicrousness of his position, her heart is touched, and she resolves to befriend him; but the pride which moves like a fresh spring beneath the ice of his shy awkwardness, makes this difficult. Polyblank, however, has found an apartment in the house of M. Pomponney, the fussy, cowardly, self-important chemist (a genuine specimen of the French shop-

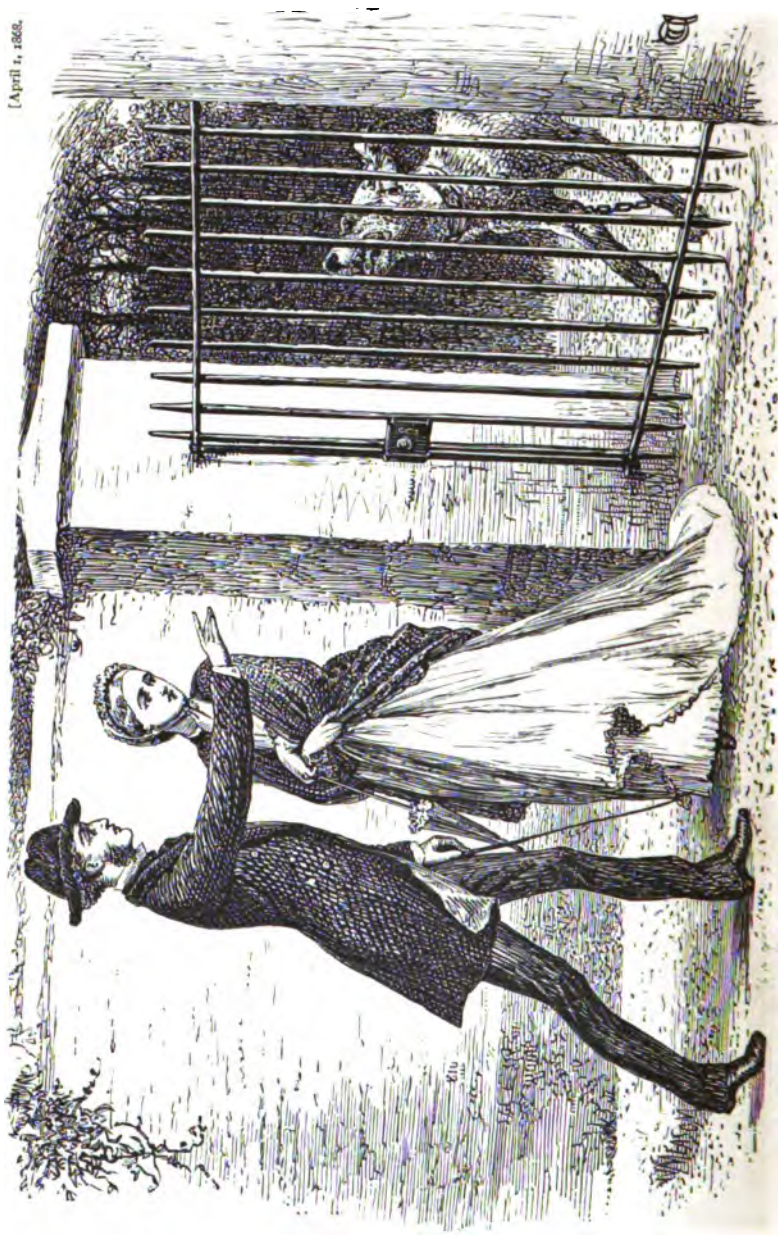
keeper, and an excellent companion-sketch to M. Durand of Miss Tytler's novel—superior to it, in some respects, by reason of the clear bubbling humour that plays round it), and the Baroness discovers him there. He is engaged to give lessons at the château, and the skill with which the slow heart is described as gradually lightening in the presence of his young scholar, is unmistakably great. Raynal, the adventurer, the villain of the story, determines, as a last great stake, to play for the hand of the Baroness while his wife lives and still has the power to follow him like a fate; and the other characters are happily used in defeating his plot. Joe Polyblank, the hero's brother, the reckless, vain, selfish, surgical genius, full of new ideas, and always eager for materials on which to verify hypotheses, is capitally conceived, and plays a great part in developing the story, his versatility and ready ease of address contrasting sharply with his brother's shy, embarrassed manner. (But no outline would suffice to convey any idea of the exquisite humour that pervades the work, relieving its duller pictures by unexpected flashes, as we might fancy lightning playing on an old painted window. Here and there the necessity of making his work "a novel" has led Mr. Ross to injure it a little as art by expansion of narrative, where we can easily see his natural tendency would have led him to concentrate and suggest.

"Johnny Robinson" is a very different book from "The Pretty Widow;" and yet it has this resemblance, that its whole value lies in a subtle character-contrast from which any slight thread of story that is in it derives its interest and peculiar colouring. The book is really autobiographic; but the subtle stirring of the imagination about the bottom of the bowl of life causes the waters to flow over; and, caught in a fresh light, they glimmer radiant and prismatic. The real life, though lyrically conceived, is now and then abruptly thrown into objective or dramatic attitudes, though never so long as to impress us with illusion; and the effect is very much as in the case of those little figures, which we see now and then, half hidden in the splash and play of a marble fountain; for a brief moment they are plainly exposed to us, and then they vanish again under the deceptive, almost dazzling gleam of the ærial mantle. The interest of "Johnny Robinson" arises from the subtle manner in which a real and an ideal figure are made to ceaselessly revolve round each other. So long as the author is concerned with simple childhood—its easy confidences, its awakening needs and eager curiosities—his method is sufficient; for then, although points of undoubted raw individual experience keep slipping through the thin ideal veil, there is no real disparity or rude break. But it is quite different when Johnny becomes the veritable boy. Then we have two lines of interest, not running parallel, but at right angles to each other, and the attempt, into which the mind is driven, to verify this point and that point, only leads to confusion. But the "Journeyman Engineer" only fails where greater men have failed before him. Jean Paul left

off his "Lectures on Himself" just when his childhood closed, and then the thread of narrative was taken up by a less gifted biographer; and even Goethe's "Wahrheit und Dichtung" seems to change from poetry to prose when he steps over from boyhood to youth. "Tom Brown's Schooldays" are bright and attractive, being charged with currents of universal lyrical significance. We find dry intellectual dexterity instead when we advance to the record of the college life. It is easy to idealize into an universal symbol the childhood on which we all look back as on a Paradise, let the external conditions have been what they may; for the child was independent of them as a child, and it is of the essence of imagination to conceive him apart from these, and essentially above them. But it is not so easy to make the common, distracting, disturbing elements of every-day life mediums by which to convey common currents of lyrical sympathy. Hence it happens that the "Journeyman Engineer," even before he closes his book, falls from the true idyllic tone into the merest prose, the more unrelieved that he affects to maintain the idyllic form. There is already a rude, distracted movement, artificial and unsatisfied yearnings; and these are alien to the form within whose circle he limited himself, and hence some passages do look rather loose and unreal. Our "Journeyman" would certainly have found every step in advance up to manhood and to middle-age more and more difficult and objectless, and we are, therefore, glad that he ended when his apprenticeship began. In a word, the "Journeyman Engineer" was either too forward or too fearful. He should have kept to his narrative of fact, or else have abandoned it; for this book, though it shows fine perception, lively fancy, and peculiarly delicate touches of a bright naïve humour, is in no sense introductory to, or in any way connected with, his former book. It has little abiding worth as a work of art, because of the string of individual experience on which it is hung; while, as a practical guide, it is robbed of all value by the loose indeterminateness made inevitable throughout by the ideal note struck in the outset. Perhaps there is no man more fitted to give us real insight into the struggles and needs of the decent labouring class than our "Journeyman Engineer;" but if he would produce books really serviceable to his order, he must overcome some of his small literary ambitions and tendencies to book-making, and write simply and directly of what he has seen and known. Yet it would be ungenerous did we not acknowledge the exquisite humour, the free, graceful touch with which he pictures his schools, his companions, from insinuating toffee-loving "Miss Cooper" to the hardy adventurous Bryan, as well as his mishaps and quarrels in street and Court. We must confess, however, that we liked his first book best, and would prefer to meet him next time on the ground he then so successfully opened up.



[April 1, 1886.



"Stay here, Miss Hereford."

THE ARGOSY.

APRIL 1, 1868.

ANNE HERFORD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE."

CHAPTER IX.

CHANDOS.

THE station of Hetton, some fifty miles' journey from London, on the Great Western Line, and two from Chandos, lay hot and bright in the September sun. It was afternoon when we reached it. Madame de Mellissie had preferred to stay a night in London, and go on the next day at leisure. A handsome close carriage was in waiting outside the station, its three attendants wearing the Chandos livery, its panels bearing the arms of the Chandos family, surmounted by the badge of England's baronetage, the bloody hand. The servants lifted their hands to their hats, and respectfully welcomed Madame de Mellissie.

"Is mamma well?" she inquired of them.

"Quite well, madame."

"And my brother? Why is he not here?"

"Mr. Chandos, madame, was obliged to attend a county meeting."

"Those ponderous county meetings!" she retorted. "And they never do any good. Step in, Miss Hereford."

We were soon driving along. Pauline sat behind with one of the footmen, the other remained to bring on the luggage. Madame de Mellissie looked out on the points of road as we passed, with all the glee of a child.

"This is my second visit only to Chandos since my marriage. For two years mamma was implacable, and would not see me; but last year she relented, and I came here for a little while. I don't believe, though, mamma will ever forgive me in her heart. I am sorry for it now."

"Sorry for having—having married as you did?"

"Ay, I am. Those rebellious marriages never bring luck. They can't, you know; only, girls are so thoughtless and stupid. I made my own bed, and must lie on it: it is not so bad as it might have been: but—of course, all that's left is to make the best of it. Alfred says we should get on better if we had children. I say we should not. And there, in the distance, you see the chimneys of Chandos. Look, Anne!"

She was wayward in her moods; wayward to me as to others. Sometimes, during our past journey, she would be distantly polite, calling me "*Miss Hereford*:" the next moment open and cordial as ever she had been at school. That she had thrown herself away in a worldly point of view, marrying as she did, was indisputable, and Emily Chandos was not one to forget it.

Chandos was a long, low, red brick house, with gables and turrets to its two end wings, and a small turret in the middle, which gave it a somewhat gothic appearance. It was but two stories high, and struck me as looking low, not elevated, perhaps partly from its length. No steps ascended to the house; the lower rooms were on a level with the ground outside. It was a sort of double house; the servants' rooms, kitchens, and chambers, all looking to the back, where there was a separate entrance. Extensive grounds lay around it, but they were so crowded with trees, except just close to the house, as to impart a weird-like, gloomy appearance; they completely shut Chandos House from the view of the world beyond, and the beyond world from the view of Chandos. A pretty trellised portico was at the entrance, jessamine, roses, and clematis entwined themselves round it, extending even to the windows on either hand. Before the carriage had well stopped, a gentleman rode up on horseback, followed by a groom. He threw himself from his horse, and came to the carriage-door.

"Back just in time to receive you, Emily. How are you, my dear?"

She jumped lightly from the carriage, and he was turning away with her when he saw me. His look of intense surprise was curious to behold, and he stopped in hesitation. Emily spoke: her tone a slighting one, almost disparaging.

"It is only my companion. Would you believe it, Harry, Alfred took a prudent fit, and would not suffer me to travel alone? So I engaged *Miss Hereford*: she was in quest of a situation; and we knew each other in days gone by."

He assisted me from the carriage. It was the same fine man I had seen some years before at *Mademoiselle Barlieu's*; the same pale countenance, with its delicate features and rather sad expression; the same sweet voice. He then gave his arm to his sister, and I followed them to the sitting-room. They called it the oak parlour; a large, square room, somewhat dark, its colours harmoniously blending, and its win-

dows shaded with the trained clematis and jessamine. It was the favourite sitting-room at Chandos; other reception-rooms there were: a gorgeous double drawing-room, a well-stored library, a spacious dining-room; but the oak parlour was the favourite. And none could wonder at it; for it was just one of those seductive apartments that speak to the feelings of repose.

"Where's mamma?" exclaimed Emily, as we entered.

"Not far; she will be here directly, you may be sure," replied Mr. Chandos. "Is this your first visit to our part of the country, Miss Hereford?"

"Yes; I never was here before."

Now what was there in this reply to offend Madame de Mellissie? or did she resent his speaking to me at all? She turned round, haughty pride stamped on every line of her countenance, rebuke on her tongue: though the rebuke lay in the tone, rather than in the words.

"Miss Hereford! the gentleman to whom you speak is Mr. Chandos."

Had I again omitted the sign of my dependent situation, the "sir"? I, who had resolved, with my burning face (burning again now), never so to offend for the future. I supposed that that was the meaning of Madame de Mellissie; I suppose so still, to this hour. I had spoken as though I were the equal of Mr. Chandos: I must not—I *would* not—so offend again.

"Emily, my love, you are welcome."

A little woman had entered the room, and was holding Madame de Mellissie in her arms. It was Lady Chandos. She wore a small and pretty widow's cap of net, a rich but soft black silk dress, and black lace mittens. Her nose was sharp, and her small face had a permanent redness, the result of disturbed health. She was not like her daughter, not half so beautiful; and she was not like her handsome son, unless it was in the subdued, sad expression. She quite started back when her eyes fell on me, evidently not prepared to see a stranger.

"Miss Hereford, mamma; a young lady whom I have engaged as companion. Alfred would not suffer me to travel alone."

Lady Chandos turned to me with a pleasant smile, but it struck me as being a forced one.

"I think you look more fit to take care of Miss Hereford, Emily, than Miss Hereford of you," she said.

"I am the elder by some two or three years, if you mean that, mamma. Oh! it was just a whim of Alfred's."

More questioning on either side; just the information sought for when relatives meet after a long absence. Emily answered carelessly and lightly; and I sat behind unnoticed.

Hill was called. Hill was still at Chandos, lady's-maid and house-keeper, a confidential servant. She came forward, wearing a dark brown

gown and handsome black silk apron, her gray hair banded under her close white cap. Lady Chandos spoke with her in an under-tone, most likely consulting what chamber I should be placed in, for Hill turned her eyes upon me, and looked cross.

A wide staircase, its balustrades of carved oak, gilded in places, wound up to the rooms above. A gallery, lighted from above, ran along this upper floor, from wing to wing, paintings lining it. It seemed as if these wings had some time been added to the house, for they were of a different style of architecture. A green-baize door shut them out from the gallery. Beyond this was a narrow corridor, and then a double door of stout oak, which formed the real entrance to the wings, the same on both sides. What rooms might be within them, I did not yet know. Each wing had a staircase of communication between its upper and lower floors, and also a small door of egress to the grounds on the sides of the house, where the trees grew very thick. In the east wing (the house, you must understand, facing the south) this lower outer door was kept locked and barred—to all intents and purposes, closed up; in the west wing, which was inhabited exclusively by Lady Chandos, the door was simply locked, and could be opened inside at will; though no one ever made use of it but herself, and she very rarely.

Several rooms opened from the gallery to the front—all of them bed-chambers, except one: that was the library. The library was the room next to the east wing. Opposite to it was a door opening to a room that looked back, level with the north rooms in the east wing, and also with the rooms at the back of the gallery. A similar room opened from the gallery at the other end. In fact, the house was built in uniform—one end the same as the other. Between the doors of these two rooms the wall of the gallery ran unbroken; there was, in fact, no communication whatever, as regards the upper rooms, between the back portion of the house and the front.

And now for the ground-floor. The portico was not in the middle of the house, but near to the east wing; one room only, the large dining-room, that seemed to be never used, lying between. The hall was rather small, lighted only with painted windows, and shut in, the oak-parlour being on the left hand as you entered. Two doors at the back of the hall led, the one to the handsome staircase, the other to the kitchens and other domestic rooms belonging to the household. A spacious corridor, underneath the gallery above, branched off from the hall by means of an open archway behind the oak-parlour, and ran along the house; and the various reception-rooms, all looking front, opened from it. Two magnificent drawing-rooms, communicating at will, and a study or morning-room, chiefly used by Mr. Chandos. A passage at the other end of the corridor led to the rooms at the back; but there was no communication whatever on this lower floor with the wings. The doors in the hall, leading to the stairs and to the servants' offices, as often as not

stood open during the day. Lady Chandos sat chiefly in the west wing; always when she wished to be alone. And I think that is all that need be said at present in regard to the in-door features of the house. The description has not been given unnecessarily.

Hill marshalled me up the staircase. It had been decided that I was to have the "blue-room." The stairs terminated in a wide landing. The library and the east wing lay to the right, the long gallery on the left. Hill passed two chamber-doors, and opened a third, that of the blue-room. It was as little calculated for immediate occupation as any room can well be; the whole of the furniture being covered up with clean sheets of linen, except the blue silk window-hangings. Madame de Mellissie had the room next to it, and I could hear her talking in it with her mother. Hill surveyed matters, and gave a sort of grunt.

"Ugh! I thought the maids had uncovered this room yesterday: as I've just told my lady. They must have hurried over their cleaning pretty quick. Please to step this way, miss. If you'll wait here a few minutes, I'll have things arranged."

She went back along the gallery, opened the door of the first bedroom on this side the staircase, and showed me in. It was a very pretty room, not large; its hangings and curtains of delicate chintz, lined with pale rose-colour, and its furniture *not* covered up, but as evidently not in occupation. I wondered why they could not put me in that. The window was wide open. I untied my bonnet and stood there, Hill closing the door and going down stairs, no doubt to call up the house-maids.

With the exception of the gravel drive below, and the green lawn in front of it, its velvet softness dotted with the brightest flowers, the place seemed to look upon nothing but trees, intersected with gloomy walks. Trees of all sorts—low as dwarf shrubs, high as towering poplars, dark green, light green, bright green. The walks branched everywhere—one in particular, just opposite my window, looked very gloomy, shaded as it was by dark pine-trees. I found afterwards that it was called the Pine Walk. Why the place should have struck upon me with a gloom, I can hardly tell; other people might have seen nothing to justify the impression. "Chandos has need to live in a world of its own," I thought, "for assuredly it is shut in from all view of the outer world."

There arose a sound as of some one softly whistling. It came from the adjacent library window, which must have been open the same as mine. I did not like to lean forward and look. Another moment, and the whistling ceased; some one else appeared to have entered the room, and voices in conversation supervened. They were those of Lady Chandos and her son, and I became an involuntary hearer of what troubled me much.

"This is one of Emily's wild actions," said Lady Chandos. "She

knows quite enough of our unhappy secrets to be sure that a stranger is not wanted at Chandos."

"Look for the most improbable thing in the world, mother, before you look for discretion or thought in Emily," was the reply of Mr. Chandos. "But this is but a young girl, unsuspecting naturally from her age and sex: Emily might have introduced a more dangerous inmate. And it may happen that——"

"I know what you would urge, Harry," interrupted the voice of Lady Chandos. "But there's no certainty. There cannot be: and it is most unfortunate that Emily should have brought her here. Every night, night by night as they come round, I lie awake shivering; if the wind does but move the trees, I start; if an owl shrieks forth its dreary note, I almost shriek with it. You know what we have cause to expect. And for a stranger to be sleeping in the house!"

"Yes, it is certainly unfortunate."

"It is more than that; it is dangerous. Harry, I have never, I hope, done a discourteous thing, but it did occur to me to put this young girl to sleep on the servants' side of the house. I think her being so lady-like in appearance saved her from it, not my good manners. I don't know what to be at."

Mr. Chandos made no reply.

"I wish I had done it!" resumed Lady Chandos. "But there's another thing—Emily might object: and to have any fuss would be worse than all. Still, look at the risk—the stake! Is it too late, do you think, Harry? Would it do to change her room now?"

"My dear mother, you are the best judge," observed Mr. Chandos. "I should not change the room if I could possibly avoid it; the young lady might consider it in the light of an indignity. Emily introduced her in a slighting sort of manner; but her looks are refined, her manners those of a gentlewoman."

"Yes, that's true."

"How long does Emily think of remaining?"

"She says two weeks. But she is uncertain as the wind. How *could* she think of bringing a stranger?"

"Have you told her all?—why it is just now particularly undesirable?"

"No. She never has been told. And I hope and trust she may be gone again before—before trouble comes."

"Quite right; I should not tell her. Well, mother, as you ask my opinion, I say things had better remain as arranged; let the young lady occupy the blue-room. How cross Hill looked over it!"

"Not without cause. I cannot think how Emily can have been so senseless. It is just as if she had planned the annoyance—bringing her here without writing! Had she written, I should have forbidden it."

"Let us hope that nothing will happen."

"Harry, we cannot answer for it. Again, on Ethel's account a stranger in the house is not desirable. Emily might have thought of that."

The voices ceased; I suppose the speakers quitted the library; and down I sat, overwhelmed with shame and consternation. To be introduced in this unwelcome manner into a house, bringing annoyance and discomfort to its inmates, seemed to me little less than a crime; I could scarcely have felt more guilty had I committed one.

And what was the mystery? That something or other was amiss in the family was all too evident. "Have they got a ghost here?" I said to myself in peevishness. Involuntarily the long-past words of Annette Barlieu flashed into my mind; and I had never thought of them since they were spoken. "There is always a cloud hanging over Chandos. They do not care to have a governess residing there, Miladi said it to me." Then what was the cloud?—what was the fear?

Hill came in again, saying I was to keep the chintz-room. Lady Chandos, in passing just now along the gallery to her own apartments in the west wing, saw for the first time that the blue-room was not ready. So it was decided between her and Hill that I should occupy the chintz one.

The luggage was brought up, and I began to dress for dinner. A question occurred to me—are companions expected to dress, in the wide sense of the term? I really did not know, in my inexperience. My birth entitled me to do so; but did my position? A minute's hesitation told me I was a guest at Chandos, treated and regarded as one, and might appear accordingly. So I put on a pretty low blue silk, with my necklace of real pearls, that had once been mamma's, round my neck, and the pale blue enamelled bracelets with the pearl clasps. I had been obliged to dress a good deal at Mrs. Paler's in the evening; and—to confess the truth—I liked it.

I stood at the door, hesitating whether to go down, as one is apt to do in a house, the ways of which are unfamiliar, when Mr. Chandos, ready for dinner, came suddenly out of the room opposite to the library, nearly opposite to mine, the one that I spoke of as looking to the back of the house, and adjoining the back rooms of the east wing. I concluded that it was his bed-chamber. He smiled at me as he crossed to the stairs, but did not say anything. Directly after, Emily de Mellissie appeared in the gallery, radiant in white silk, with an apple-blush rose in her hair, and a diamond aigrette embedded in it. They said she was full of whims—as I knew for myself. How ardently I hoped that some whim would send her speedily away from Chandos!

We went into the first drawing-room, one of the most beautiful rooms I had ever seen, its fittings violet and gold. Lady Chandos was there, and did not appear to have changed her dress. The dinner was served in the oak-parlour; not once in a year did they use the great dining-

room. Lady Chandos kindly passed her arm through mine, and Mr. Chandos brought in his sister.

It was a pleasant dinner, and a pleasant evening. Emily was on her best behaviour, telling all manner of amusing anecdotes of Paris life to her mother and brother, ignoring me. I listened, and was spoken to by the others now and then. We did not quit the oak-parlour. When dessert was taken, Hickens, the butler, removed it and brought in tea. "After my snug sitting-room up-stairs, the drawing-room is so large," observed Lady Chandos to me, as if in apology; "I like this parlour best."

Upon retiring to rest, a neat-looking servant, with light hair, whose name I found was Harriet, came to the chintz-room, and asked whether she should do anything for me. She said she was one of the housemaids—there were two besides herself, Lizzy and Emma. Altogether, including the coachman, a helper in the stables, and two gardeners—all four of whom were out of doors, living half a mile away—there were seventeen servants at Chandos. A large number, as it seemed to me, considering the very little attendance that was required of them. I told Harriet I had been accustomed to wait upon myself, and she retired.

But I could not get to sleep. The conversation I had overheard kept haunting me. I wondered what the mystery could be; I wondered whether I should be disturbed in the night by noises, or else. What uncanny doings could there be in the house?—what unseemly inmates, rendering it inexpedient that a stranger should share its hospitality? Was it really tenanted by ghosts?—or by something worse? At any rate, they did not molest me, and my sleep at last was tranquil.

We went down the following morning at half-past eight; Emily in a white dimity robe of no shape, but tied round the waist with a scarlet cord, the effect altogether rather untidy; I in a mauve-coloured muslin, with ribbons of the same shade; and found Lady and Mr. Chandos waiting breakfast in the oak-parlour. The panels of this room were of alternate white and carved oak, with a great deal of gilt about both; it had a most unusual appearance; I had never seen anything like it before. The ceiling was white, with gilt scrolls round, and cornices. The large chimney-glass was in a carved oak frame, gilded in places to match the walls; the slanting girandole opposite the window, reflecting the green grass and the waving trees in its convex mirrored surface, had a similar frame. The chandelier for the wax lights was of gilt, also the branches on the mantelpiece, and those of the girandole. It was a pleasant room to enter—as I thought that morning. The oak-brown silk curtains, with their golden satin-wrought flowers, were drawn quite back from the windows, which were thrown open to the lovely morning air; a bright fire burnt in the grate opposite the door; the breakfast-table with its snow-white linen, its painted Worcester china, and its glittering silver, was in the middle. Easy-chairs stood about the room, a sofa against

the wall—all covered to match the curtains—brown and gold: a piano was there, a sideboard stood at the back, underneath the reflective mirror; other chairs, tables, ornaments; and the dark carpet was soft as the softest moss. Out of all order though cavillers for severe taste might have called the room, I know that it had an indescribable charm.

Lady Chandos, dressed just as she had been the previous day—and I found it was her usual dress at all times—sat with her back to the window, her son facing her, I and Emily on either side. Breakfast was about half over when Hickens brought in some letters on a small silver waiter, presenting them to Mr. Chandos. I was soon to learn that all letters coming to the house, whether for servants or else, were invariably handed first of all to Mr. Chandos. One of these was directed to "Lady Chandos;" two to "Harry Chandos, Esquire;" the fourth to "Mrs. Chandos." Mr. Chandos put his mother's letter on the waiter again, and Hickens handed it to her. He then came back with the waiter to his master, who placed the other letter upon it.

"For Mrs. Chandos." And Hickens went out with it.

Who was Mrs. Chandos? I should have liked to ask, but dared not.

"Do you mean to say that there is no letter for me, Harry?" exclaimed Madame de Mellissie. "That's my punctual husband! He said he should be quite certain to send me a letter to-day."

"The French letters often come in later, Emily," remarked her brother.

He and Lady Chandos read their letters, Emily talked and laughed, and the meal came to an end. At its conclusion Mr. Chandos offered to go round the grounds with his sister.

"Yes, I'll go," she answered. "You can go also, Miss Hereford, if you like. But we must get our bonnets and parasols first, Harry."

My bonnet and parasol were soon got, and I stood at my bed-room door, waiting for Emily. As she came down the gallery, the green-baize door on my right, leading to the east wing, opened, and a middle-aged lady appeared at it. Madame de Mellissie advanced and cordially saluted her.

"I should have paid you a visit yesterday, Mrs. Freeman, but that I heard Mrs. Chandos was ill."

"You are very kind, madame," was the lady's reply. "Mrs. Chandos was exceedingly unwell yesterday, but she is better to-day. She——"

Mrs. Freeman was interrupted. A lovely-looking girl—girl she looked, though she may have been six or seven-and-twenty—appeared at the door of one of the rooms in the wing. Her dress was white; she wore a beautiful little head-dress of lace and lavender ribbons, and she came forward smiling.

"I heard you had arrived, Emily, dear, and should have joined you

all yesterday, but I was so poorly," she said, clasping Madame de Mellissie's hand. "How well you look!"

"And you look well also," replied Emily. "We must never judge you by your looks, Mrs. Chandos."

"No, that you must not: I always look in rude health, in spite of my ailments," answered Mrs. Chandos. "Will you not come and sit with me for half an hour?"

"Of course I will," was Madame de Mellissie's reply, as she untied her bonnet and threw it to me carelessly, speaking as careless words.

"Have the goodness to tell Mr. Chandos that I am not going out yet." Mrs. Chandos, who had not noticed me before, turned in surprise, and looked at me; but Madame de Mellissie did not, I suppose, deem me worth an introduction.

I went down stairs to deliver her message. Mr. Chandos was waiting in the oak-parlour, talking to his mother.

"Madame de Mellissie has desired me to say that she will not go out yet, sir."

"I did not expect she would," he answered, with a slight laugh, "for she is changeable as the wind. Tell her so from me, will you, Miss Hereford?"

He bent his dark blue eyes upon me with a half-saucy glance, as if intimating that he meant what he said.

"Very well, sir."

I returned to my own room, took off my things, and sat down to think.

Who was Mrs. Chandos?

CHAPTER X.

OUT OF DOORS AT CHANDOS.

THAT day was a dull one. I did not feel at home, and could not make myself feel so. Madame de Mellissie went out in the carriage with Lady Chandos, and I was alone. I strolled out a little in the afternoon, just to see what the place outside was like. The gates of egress were on the left, the gravel drive leading straight to them; but there were so many paths and walks, and trees and rocks, and banks and flower-beds on either side, that you might almost lose yourself, and quite lose sight of the broad drive. The most curious-looking feature about Chandos was the little upper turret: but for the narrow gothic window in it, it might have been taken for a pigeon-house.

I came back, and crossed to the pine walk; that again was intersected by paths, conducting it was hard to say whither. The trees were towering aloft, the lower shrubs were high and thick. In three minutes after quitting the house, not a vestige even of its chimneys was to be

seen ; and I retraced my steps, not caring to lose myself. But for the beautiful order in which everything was kept, the place might have been called a wilderness.

I noticed one thing : that the front windows in each of the wings had their inside shutters closed ; strong oak shutters : both the lower and the upper rooms were shut in from the light of day. I never saw them opened while I stayed at Chandos. The lower windows, looking to the side of the house, were also kept dark ; but the rooms above and those looking to the back were open. A narrow gravel path, shut in by laurels, led round the wings to the back of the house. The servants used that by the east wing, the one inhabited by Mrs. Chandos. No one used the other, except Lady Chandos. For a servant or any one else to be seen there would have been high treason, involving probably dismissal. It was an understood law of the house, and never rebelled against. The shrubs on Lady Chandos's side had grown thick as a very grove, affording just space for one person to pass to the small door that gave entrance to the wing. I knew nothing of the prohibition in strolling there that day. On learning it afterwards, I felt thankful not to have been seen.

I was in-doors, and sitting in my bed-chamber, the chintz-room, when the carriage returned. Emily, in high spirits, saw me as she ran up stairs, and came in.

"All alone, Anne ! We have had a charming drive. To-morrow, if you are good, you shall have one ; we'll take the large carriage."

She stood with her foot on a small low chair, tilting it about, and looking out at the servants, who were turning the horses to drive round to the stables at the back.

"What a nice place this seems to be, Madame de Mellissie ! But I think, if I were Lady Chandos, I should have the trees and shrubs thinned a little."

"It is mamma's pleasure that they shall be thick. She only lives in retirement. Were my brother, Sir Thomas, to come home, he might effect a change. As long as he is away, mamma's will is paramount at Chandos."

"How many brothers have you ?"

"Two. Sir Thomas and Harry."

"Have you lost any ?"

"Any brothers ? A little one : Greville. He died when he was six years old. Why do you ask ?"

"I was only wondering who Mrs. Chandos was. It has been crossing my mind that she is perhaps a daughter-in-law."

Madame de Mellissie turned on me a haughty face of reproof. "It certainly is no affair of yours, Miss Hereford. Mrs. Chandos is Mrs. Chandos ; she is no impostor."

"I beg your pardon, madame," I meekly answered, feeling I had

deserved it. What right had I, Anne Hereford, to be curious, and to show it?

It effectually silenced me for the rest of the day. We dined together; herself, Lady Chandos, and I. Mrs. Chandos I saw no more of, and Mr. Chandos was dining at Marden, a town some few miles off.

We were at breakfast the following morning, when the letters, as before, were brought in. Two or three for the servants, which Mr. Chandos returned to Hickens, one for Mr. Chandos, and one for Madame Alfred de Mellissie.

"I thought he would be writing," Emily observed, in a tone of apathy, carelessly holding out her hand for the letter. "Though I know he hates it like poison, Frenchman like."

"It is not your husband's hand, Emily," said Mr. Chandos.

"No? Why—I declare it is old Madame de Mellissie's! What can be amiss?" she cried.

"There! was ever anything like that?" she exclaimed, glancing down the letter. "Alfred's taken ill: his fancied gastric fever has turned into a real one. And I must go back without delay, the old *mère* writes.

"Is he very ill?" inquired Lady Chandos.

"So *she* says—in danger. But she is timid and fanciful. I shall not go."

"Will you allow me to see the letter, Emily?" asked Lady Chandos, in a grave tone.

"See it and welcome; read it out for the public benefit, if you will, mamma. Look at Harry, staring at me with his blue eyes! He deems me, no doubt, the very model of a loving wife."

"Emily! can you have read this letter?" asked Lady Chandos.

"Yes, I've read it."

"Then how can you hesitate? Your husband is in danger: he may not survive: he will not, they say, unless a change takes place. You must hasten away by the first train."

"Mamma, you need not take the half of it for gospel. Madame de Mellissie is so wrapped up in her son, that if his finger aches she sends for a doctor, and asks whether it will mortify."

"Child! I must recommend you to go," was the impressive response of Lady Chandos.

"Of course I shall go; I never meant to hesitate," came the peevish answer. "But it is excessively tiresome."

It appeared that the letter to Mr. Chandos was also from Madame de Mellissie, asking him to urge his sister's instant departure. She finished her breakfast, and was leaving the room to prepare, when she saw me following.

"I do not want you just now, Miss Hereford. Pauline will see to my things."

"But I have my own to pack."

"Your own! What for? Alfred de Mellissie is not your husband, that you should hasten to him."

"But—am I not to go with you, madame?"

"Certainly not," was her emphatic answer. "It would be a needless expense and trouble."

I felt dumbfounded. "But, Madame de Melissie, what am I to do?"

"Do! Why stay here till my return. What else should you do? I shall be back in a few days at most. I know what Monsieur Alfred's danger is! Only, if I did not make the journey, madame la mère would hold me forth to all Paris as a model of barbarity. Mamma," she quickly added, turning to Lady Chandos, "I shall return here to finish my visit as soon as I can get away. It will not be a week before you'll see me again. You can let Miss Hereford wait here for me, can't you? Can't you, Harry?"

"Provided Miss Hereford will make herself at home with us, which I fancy she has not yet done," was the reply of Mr. Chandos, looking at me with a smile. Lady Chandos simply bowed her head.

"Oh, she is one who always gives you the notion of being shy," carelessly replied Emily, as she ran up the staircase.

What was I to do? I could not say to her, "You shall take me;" but, after the conversation I had overheard, it was most unpleasant to me to stay. I ran after Emily. I told her that my remaining might not be really agreeable to Lady and Mr. Chandos. Her reply was, that they must make it agreeable, for there was no accommodation for me at Madame de Mellissie's.

"Look here, Anne; don't you be shy and stupid. I cannot drop you in the street like a waif, *en route*, and I cannot take you home. Suppose Alfred's illness should turn to typhus fever? would it be well for you to be there? But there's no room for you, and that's the fact."

I disclosed to her my penniless condition, for some of my poor twenty-five shillings had melted on the journey from Paris, and I had but fifteen left. I begged her to lend me some money, and I would find my way alone to Nulle. Emily laughed heartily, but she did not give me any.

"I shall be back next week, child. Make yourself easy."

By mid-day she was gone, Pauline attending her, and Mr. Chandos escorting her to the station. I was left, with the words I had heard spoken, as to my unwelcome presence in the house, beating their refrain on my brain. Whether Lady Chandos remonstrated privately with her daughter against leaving me, or whether she recognized it as a sort of necessity, and tacitly acquiesced in the arrangement, I had no means of knowing.

What was I to do with myself? Put on my things and go out? There was nothing else to do. As I came down with them on, Lady Chandos met me in the hall.

"Are you going abroad, Miss Hereford?"

"If you have no objection, madam. But I was only going because I felt at a loss for something to occupy myself with. Perhaps you can give me something to do, Lady Chandos?"

"I cannot aid you, I believe. It is a pity Madame de Mellissie should have left you here, for I fear you will find it dull; but I suppose there was no help for it. I speak for your sake, my dear," she kindly added.

"I should be so glad to do anything for you. I can sew."

"My maids do that," she said. "You will find some pleasant walks in the vicinity. There is one to the left, as you leave the gates, exceedingly rural and quiet. You will be quite safe: it is an honest neighbourhood."

I found the walk she spoke of, and stayed out for nearly two hours. Not a single house, but one, did I pass: I found afterwards that what few houses there were lay to the right. This one stood in view of the entrance gates, nearly opposite the lodge; a substantial, moderate-sized house, closed at present, and displaying a board—"To Let." I had half a mind to open its front gate and explore the garden, but I had been out long enough, and turned to Chandos.

I was not to go home without an adventure. In passing through the small iron gate, by the side of the large ones, an awfully fierce great dog sprang forward, savagely barking. Back I flew, and shut the gate between us: why he did not leap over the gate, I don't know: he stood there barking, and rattling part of a chain that was attached to his collar. Never having been brought into contact with dogs, I was terribly afraid of fierce ones, and cowered there in an agony of fear, not daring to run away, lest the angry animal should leap the gate and spring upon me.

Footsteps came behind me, and I looked round, hoping for protection. It was Mr. Chandos. He saw what was the matter, and seemed to make but one bound to the gate.

"Stay there, Miss Hereford."

He passed quietly through, and confronted the dog; the dog confronted him, barking still.

"Nero!"

The voice allayed the angry passions, and the dog stepped up. Mr. Chandos seized the end of the chain.

"You and I must have a settling for this, Nero. Will you come here, Miss Hereford, and I will teach him to know you, so that he does not alarm you again, should he get loose. He must have broken his chain."

"Oh, sir! Pray do not make me come near him!"

Mr. Chandos turned his face quickly towards me. "Are you afraid of dogs?"

"Rather, sir. I am of that one."

At this juncture, a groom came running up in search of the dog. Mr. Chandos spoke sharply to him, and the man answered, in a tone of deprecation, that it was no fault of his; that the dog sometimes, in his fits of effort to get loose, was as a "born devil," and in one of those fits had, a quarter of an hour before, snapped his chain, and burst through the stable window.

"He has run the fit off, then," said Mr. Chandos, "for he is quiet enough now. Take him back, and mind you secure him fast."

The man took the chain in his hand, and went off, leading the dog. Mr. Chandos opened the gate for me. I had not overcome the fright yet, and my face felt ashy pale.

"My poor child! It has indeed frightened you. Do you feel faint?"

"I shall not faint, sir. I never fainted in my life."

Without the least ceremony, he placed my hand within his arm, and walked on. A little to the right, underneath some thick cypress trees, there was a bench. He bade me sit down, and seated himself beside me.

"You will be all the better for resting here a minute or two. How did it happen? Where did you and Mr. Nero encounter each other?"

"I had been out walking, sir. Lady Chandos told me of a pretty walk there is to the left, outside the gates. In coming back, I was just inside the gate, when the dog came up, leaping and barking."

"And you were frightened?"

"Very much frightened. Had I not occasion, sir? One moment later, and he might have torn me to pieces."

"It is my dog," he resumed, "and I am exceedingly sorry he should have given you the alarm. Will you return good for evil?"

"Good for evil! In what manner, sir?" I asked.

"By not mentioning this to my mother," he replied. "She has a great dislike to dogs being kept on the premises. Some few months ago, when a friend of mine was dying, he asked me to take his dog—this one which has just frightened you—but Lady Chandos would only consent to its coming here on condition that it should be kept tied up. It is a valuable dog, though fierce on occasions, the confinement to which it is mostly condemned making it more fierce. I will take care it does not break bounds again, and I would prefer that my mother should not know of this."

"I will not tell her, sir. I suppose Lady Chandos dislikes dogs as much as I do."

"She does not dislike dogs: she rather likes them. But she objects—at least, she has objected latterly—to have dogs loose about the premises."

"She fears their going mad, perhaps?"

Mr. Chandos laughed. "No, she does not fear that. I must make you and Nero friends, Miss Hereford; you will then find how little he is to be dreaded. You shall come to the stables with me when he is tied up fast. How long have you known my sister?" he resumed, changing the subject.

"I knew her a little at Mademoiselle Barlieu's. I entered the school just before she left."

"Then you must have known—have known—the circumstances under which she quitted it?"

He had begun the sentence rapidly, as if impelled to it by impulse, but after the hesitation, continued it more slowly.

"Yes, sir. They could not be kept from the school."

"A mad act—a mad act!" he murmured: "and—if I may read signs—heartily repented of. It is, I fancy, an exemplification of the old saying, Miss Hereford, 'Marry in haste, and repent at leisure.' Poor Emily has leisure enough for it before her: she is only beginning life. I went over at the time to Mademoiselle Barlieu's."

"Yes, sir; I saw you when you were going away, and I hid myself in a niche of the hall while you passed. I knew you again as soon as I met you here."

"You must have a good memory for faces, then," he said, laughing.

"I think a circumstance made me recollect you, sir. It was, that your face struck upon me at Mademoiselle Barlieu's as being familiar to my memory; I felt sure that if I had not seen you before, I had seen some one very like you."

He turned round and looked at me a full minute ere he spoke.

"Like whom, Miss Hereford?"

"I cannot tell, sir. I wish I could tell. The resemblance haunts me still."

"It's not much of a face to remember," he slightly said, as a stout gentleman came through the entrance-gates. He carried a roll of paper, or parchment, and was wiping his brows, his hat off.

"You look warm, Dexter," called out Mr. Chandos.

"It's a close day for autumn, and I walked over," was the response of the new-comer, as he turned out of the great drive and came up. "I'm glad to catch you at home, Mr. Chandos. I have had an offer for this house."

Mr. Chandos made room for him to sit down. "I have been turning myself into a knight-errant, Dexter; delivering a lady from the fangs of a ferocious dog."

Mr. Dexter looked as if he did not know whether to take the words in jest or earnest.

"That dog of mine got loose, and terrified this young lady nearly out of her life. I really do not know but he would have attacked her, had

I not come home at the very moment. She is sitting here to gain breath and courage. About the house? which house do you mean?"

"I speak of the house opposite your lodge-gates, sir," resumed Mr. Dexter, after giving me a polite nod. "Haines came over to me this morning, saying a gentleman wished to take it, and required to enter immediately."

"What gentleman? Who is he?"

"Nobody belonging to this neighbourhood, sir: a stranger. Haines spoke of a Mr. Freshfield; but was not clear upon the point whether it was for Mr. Freshfield himself, or for a friend of Mr. Freshfield's. It's all perfectly right, Haines says; he will be answerable for that; rent as safe as if it were paid beforehand."

"Well, I shall be glad to let the house," returned Mr. Chandos. "You need not rise, Miss Hereford; we are not discussing secrets. It has been empty these nine months, you know, Dexter; and empty houses bring no good to themselves."

"Very true, sir. I had an offer for it some days back, and did not trouble you with it, for I know you would not have accepted the tenant. It was that Major Mann, and his rough lot," added Mr. Dexter, dropping his voice.

"Oh," shortly replied Mr. Chandos, his lip curling. "I should be sorry to have them within hail of my gates."

"I was sure of that. He pressed hard, though; seemed to have taken a fancy for the place. I put him off as civilly as I could; it's no use to make enemies of people, where it can be helped. 'My Lady Chandos will only let it to a quiet tenant,' I told him. 'Wants a Darby and Joan, perhaps?' said he, turning up his nose. 'Something of that sort, major,' I answered; and so the thing dropped through. Haines assures me the present applicant is most respectable; all that could be desired."

"Very well, Dexter, I give you power to treat. You know who would be acceptable and who not, just as well as I do."

"Haines wants the bargain to be concluded to-day, sir," said Mr. Dexter, rising. "He has orders to furnish at once."

"Is Haines going to furnish?"

"As it appears. I should fancy it may be for somebody arriving from abroad. There's plenty of money, Haines says. I had better put a man or two on to the garden at once, had I not, sir?"

"Yes. And don't have those complaints about the locks, Dexter, as we had, you may remember, when the last house on the estate was let. Let them be examined throughout."

"I'm off, then," said Mr. Dexter. "Good-day, sir. My respects to my lady. Good-day, ma'am."

"Good-day," I answered.

"Possessions bring trouble, Miss Hereford," cried Mr. Chandos, as

Mr. Dexter moved away. "There are several houses on this estate, and they are almost as much plague as profit. One tenant finds fault and grumbles; another must have this, that, and the other done; a third runs away, leaving no rent behind him, and his premises dilapidated. Our last agent was not a desirable one; accepted tenants who were not eligible, and did not look after details. He died some months back, and a pretty game we found he had been carrying on; grinding the tenants down, and cheating us. Dexter, recently appointed, appears to be a keen man of business, and straightforward: that is, as agents go: they are none of them too honest."

"I think I should let the houses for myself, sir, on my own estate, and not employ an agent."

"Do you mean that as a piece of advice to me, Miss Hereford?" he returned, smiling. "What I might do on my own estate, I cannot answer for: but this one is not mine. It belongs to my brother, Sir Thomas Chandos. The mistress of it for the time being is my mother; but I take the trouble off her hands. Here's Dexter, coming back again!"

"It is not often I go away and leave half my errand undone, though I have this time," he called out as he came up, and extended the roll of paper he held. "This is the plan of the proposed alteration in the stables at the farm, sir, which you wished to look over. Shall I carry it to the house?"

"By no means. I'll carry it myself, if you will give it me," replied Mr. Chandos. And the agent finally departed.

"Are you sufficiently rested, Miss Hereford?"

My answer was to rise and proceed towards the house. Mr. Chandos, walking by my side, seemed absorbed in the roll, which he had partially opened. On the right the drive leading to the stables branched off. I was glad that Mr. Chandos passed on, and did not propose to go to Nero then. Lady Chandos came forward as we were entering the portico.

"What is this—about the dog attacking you, Miss Hereford?" she exclaimed.

I was so taken to, after the wish expressed by Mr. Chandos, and the promise I had given him, that I remained like a stupid mute. He answered:

"Nero got loose, mother. Miss Hereford was in the act of entering the gate—or had just entered, was it not, Miss Hereford?—and he like a castle's zealous watch-dog, prevented her advancing further."

"Did he touch you, Miss Hereford?" Lady Chandos asked, turning to me.

"He was not quick enough, madam: I ran back beyond the gate. My fear was, that he would leap over; but he did not. Perhaps it was too high."

"But he would have attacked you had you not gone back?"

"I think he would. He seemed very savage."

"Harry, this is just what I have feared," Lady Chandos observed to her son, in a peculiarly significant tone. "A fierce, powerful dog, like that, *is* liable to break his chain and get loose; and I have said so to you over and over again. He would attack a stranger—any one he did not know, and might cause a fearful disturbance. You know why I have feared this."

"The stables are safely closed at night, mother," was the somewhat curious reply of Mr. Chandos.

"Robin says the dog sprang through the window; dashed through the glass. There can be no security against that, day or night."

"My opinion is, that some of the men must have been teasing him, and so worked him into a fury. I shall inquire into it, and if I find it to be the fact, whoever did it shall go. Better precaution shall be observed for the future."

"Yes," said Lady Chandos, in a decisive tone, "and that precaution must be the sending away of the dog."

"But really, mother, there is no necessity."

"Harry, I am surprised at you. You know why I urge it; why I ought to urge it."

The conversation did not make me feel very comfortable, and I interposed. "I do beg that no change may be made on my account, Lady Chandos. No harm is done. I am not hurt."

"It is not on your account I am speaking, Miss Hereford. And—as you are not hurt—I am pleased that the thing has happened, because it must prove to Mr. Chandos the necessity of sending away the dog. He could not see it previously."

"I should see it equally with you, mother, were the dog to be insecurely fastened. But if we make him secure—"

"You deemed him secure now," she interrupted. "I will not risk it. Good heavens, Harry! have you forgotten the stake?"

"What stake? I thought, as I went up to my room. Certainly the words savoured of something that I could not comprehend.

Standing at the window at the head of the stairs was the young lady whom they called Mrs. Chandos. She wore a bonnet and shawl, and spoke as I approached.

"I do believe it is raining!"

"Yes," I replied; "some drops were falling when I came in."

But it appeared that Mrs. Chandos, when she spoke, had not thought she was addressing me, for she turned round in astonishment at the sound of my voice.

"Oh—I beg your pardon," she coldly said. And then I saw that she had a white kitten in her arms. I went into my room, but did not close the door, and in a minute I heard the approach of Mrs. Freeman.

"Did you ever know anything so tiresome?" exclaimed Mrs. Chandos to her. "It is raining fast. I'm sure it is not once in a month, hardly, that I make up my mind to walk in the grounds, but so sure as I do, I am prevented. It rains; or it snows; or it's too hot; or there's thunder in the air! It comes on purpose, I know."

"Perhaps it will not be much," replied Mrs. Freeman; who, by the sound of her voice, appeared to be also now looking out at the window.

"It will: look at those clouds, gathering fast into one thick mass. Oo-oh!" she added, with a shiver, "I don't like to hear the dripping of the rain on the trees: it puts me in mind of—of—"

"Of what, my dear?" asked Mrs. Freeman.

"Of the night I first heard those awful tidings. It was raining then, a steady, soaking rain, and I had been listening to its falling on the leaves till the monotony of the sound worried me, and I began wishing *he* was at home. Not on these trees, you know; we were at the other place. Drop, drop, drop; as the rain never sounds but where there are trees for it to fall on. The opening of the room-door interrupted me, and my lady came in. Ah! I shall never forget her; her face was white, her eyes looked wild, her hands were lifted; I saw there was something dreadful to be told. She sat down, and, drawing me to her, said——"

"Hush—sh—sh!" interposed Mrs. Freeman, with sharp caution. "You may be speaking for other ears than mine."

"I was not going to allude to *facts*," was the retort of Mrs. Chandos, her tone peevish at the interruption. "My lady asked me if I could bear trouble; fiery trouble, such as had rarely overtaken one in my rank of life before; and my answer was to fall into a fainting fit at her feet. Never, since then, have I liked to hear the rain pattering down on the leaves where the trees are thick."

I would have shut my door, but feared it might look ungracious to do so. They had eyes, and could see that it was open, if they pleased to look; therefore they might choose their subjects accordingly. Mrs. Chandos resumed.

"Who *is* that young lady? She came up the stairs, and I spoke without looking round, thinking it was you."

"I don't know who. A Miss Hereford. She came here with Madame de Mellissie as travelling companion."

"But she is a stranger to Lady Chandos?"

"Entirely so."

"Then why does Lady Chandos permit her to be here? Is it well, in this house of misfortune? Is it prudent?"

"Scarcely so. Of course Lady Chandos can only hope—how you are squeezing that kitten, my dear!"

"Pretty little thing! it likes to be squeezed," responded Mrs. Chandos. "It is hiding itself from you; from that ugly bonnet. You

do wear frightful bonnets, Mrs. Freeman; as ugly as the black ones of Lady Chandos."

"I do not think widows' bonnets ugly," was the reply of Mrs. Freeman. "To some faces they are particularly becoming."

"They are so ugly, so disfiguring, that I hope it will be long before I am called upon to wear them," returned Mrs. Chandos, speaking impulsively. "Were my husband to die—but there! I know what you want to say; why do I dwell upon trifles when heavy calamities are on the house?"

"Suppose you walk about the gallery, my dear?" suggested Mrs. Freeman. "I see no chance of the rain's leaving off."

"No, I'll go back and take my things off, and play with pussy. Poor pussy wanted a walk in the grounds as much as I did. "Oh"—with a shriek—"it's gone!"

For the kitten, allured, perhaps, by the attractions of a promenade in the grounds, had leaped from the arms of Mrs. Chandos on to a shrub below. I saw it from my window. The shriek brought out Mr. Chandos from the house; he looked up.

"My kitten, Harry," she said. "It has flown away from me. Get it, will you? But I am sorry to give you the trouble."

Mr. Chandos took the kitten from the bush and once more looked up; at my window as well as at theirs.

"Who will come for it? Will you, Miss Hereford?—and oblige my—oblige Mrs. Chandos."

Oblige my—*what*? Was he going to say "sister-in-law" when he suddenly stopped himself? But, if so, why should he have stopped himself? And how can she be his sister-in-law? Were she the wife of Sir Thomas, she would be Lady Chandos; and Emily had said her brother Thomas was not married. She had said she had but two brothers, Thomas and Harry; who, then, was this young Mrs. Chandos? That she had a husband living was apparent, from the conversation I had just heard; and I had imagined all along that she must be the daughter-in-law of Lady Chandos.

These thoughts passed through my head as I ran down for the kitten. Mr. Chandos handed it to me, and turned away, for he was called to by some one at a distance. At the same moment the kitten was taken from my hands. It was by Mrs. Freeman, who had also come down.

"I hope it is not hurt, poor thing," she said, looking at it. "It seems lively enough."

"Mr. Chandos said it was not hurt, when he gave it to me."

"Oh, that's right. Had it been hurt, Mrs. Chandos would have grieved over it. She is fond of this kitten; and she has so few pleasures, poor child!"

"Who *is* Mrs. Chandos?" I asked, in a low tone.

"Madam?" returned Mrs. Freeman.

The tone—cold, haughty, reserved—struck upon me as conveying the keenest reproach for my unjustifiable curiosity; unjustifiable so far as that I had betrayed it. I faltered forth the question again—for she seemed looking at me and waiting; and it might be that she had not heard it.

“Who is Mrs. Chandos?”

“Mrs. Chandos?” was the answer, “Who should she be? She is Mrs. Chandos.” And Mrs. Freeman stalked away.

That same evening at dusk, the dog Nero was taken away.

“Is he going to be shot?” I asked impulsively of Mr. Chandos.

“Oh, no. A farmer near has promised to take care of him.”

But the tone was not quite so free as usual, and I said no more.

The time passed monotonously. Always looking upon myself as an intruder, an unwelcome interloper, I could not feel at home at Chandos. A letter arrived in course of post from Emily de Mellissie, saying she had found her husband certainly ill, but not as much so as ‘la mère’ had been willing to lead them to expect. In a few days she should write and fix the date of her return. Not liking to sit down to the piano uninvited—and no one did invite me—it remained closed. Now and then, when I knew that neither Lady Chandos nor her son was at home, I would play quietly for a few minutes—stealthily might be the best term. Twice Lady Chandos took me for a drive; she went herself every day; sometimes taking Mrs. Chandos. The latter I very rarely saw at any time.

And so I was reduced to walking and reading. Newspapers, books, and reviews lay about the room. Had I been anything of a dress-maker, I should have made up the dresses bought in Paris, failing the money to give them out; as it was, they lay in my large trunk, unmade. Mr. Chandos had told me the books in the library were at my service, and I borrowed some of them.

We were having lovely days. On one of them I strolled out, a book in hand. But before settling myself on a bench, I went to the park-gates to see how they were getting on with the opposite house. They had been busy furnishing it for two days, and I—for want of something better to do—had taken an interest in it and watched the things going in. It appeared all in order this morning; there was no bustle, no litter; curtains were up, blinds were half-drawn, and smoke was ascending from more than one chimney. The tenant or tenants must have arrived and taken possession.

As I stood leaning over the small side-gate, there came out of that house a man; a gentleman, to appearance; short, and with a dark face. But of the latter I caught but a passing glimpse, for he turned his back immediately to look up at the front of the house. Calling to a man-servant, he appeared to be pointing out something that he wished done, or finding fault with something that had been left undone. I

could not hear the words, but I could the tones ; they were authoritative, as was his manner. He was evidently the master.

I thought I had seen him before, for there was something in his figure, and even in the passing sight of his face, which struck upon me as being familiar. I waited for him to turn again, that I might obtain a better view ; but he did not, and soon went in. I returned to a bench near the broad open walk, and opened my book. Presently Mr. Chandos came up, and asked what I was reading.

"Are you fond of Shakspeare?" he questioned, when he knew.

"I have never read his works, sir."

"Never read Shakspeare!" he cried, in astonishment. "You cannot mean that, Miss Hereford?"

"But, sir, I have always been at school. And school-girls have no opportunity of obtaining such works. At my English school, Miss Fenton's, there were some volumes of Shakspeare in the governess's private parlour ; but I never saw anything of them but their backs."

"Have you never read Byron?"

"Oh, no."

"Nor any novels?"

"Not any books of that kind."

He looked at me with a half smile, standing with his back against a tree. "I think I understood from my sister that you are an orphan?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you no home?"

"I have neither home nor relatives. The place that seems more like a home to me than any other is Mademoiselle Barlieu's, at Nulle. I was there four years."

"Did you never get any French novels there?"

"Indeed no. The Miss Barlieus would have been in fits at the bare thought. And since I left them, I have been too fully occupied to read for recreation. This is the first leisure time I have had for nearly as long as I can remember."

"Indeed! It must seem strange to you."

"So strange, sir, that I feel like a fish out of water."

"Mr. Chandos laughed. "Did you visit much, when you were at Nulle?"

"No, sir. I had not a friend in the town. Towards the last, Miss Annette would sometimes take me when she went out to spend the evening."

"Will you allow me to direct your reading, Miss Hereford?" he returned, after a pause.

"Oh, sir, if you would!" I answered eagerly. "For in truth that library seems to me like a wild sea, with its multitude of books."

"Yes; and a young lady might get amidst shoals, for all the books are not equally worthy. I will look out a few and give them to you."

"Thank you, sir. Meanwhile may I go on with this, as I have begun it?"

He left the tree, took the book from my hand and looked at it. "Othello;" yes, you may read that."

As he returned the book to me and resumed his position against the tree, some one approached from the outer gate. I thought it was a visitor. He came strolling on, his arms underneath his coat-tails; and soon I perceived it was the gentleman I had seen at the newly occupied house, giving his directions to the servant. But ah! as he neared us, remembrance, with its cold chill of terror, struck upon my heart. I knew him instantly. It was Mr. Edwin Barley. Mr. Edwin Barley, and not in the least altered.

"Do you want anything, sir?" demanded Mr. Chandos. For the intruder was passing us without ceremony, and peering about as curiously and freely as he might have done on the public road.

"I don't want anything," was the independent answer. "The open air is free to walk in, I believe."

"Quite so—when you are without these boundaries. But these are private property."

"I am aware that they are the grounds belonging to Chandos House; but I did not know a stranger might not be permitted to walk in them."

"Lady Chandos prefers privacy. Strangers are not in the habit of entering here; nor can their doing so be sanctioned."

"I presume that I am speaking to Mr. Harry Chandos?"

Mr. Chandos bowed his head, very coldly. Mr. Edwin Barley bowed in his turn; it might have been called an introduction.

"I will retreat," he said, "and I suppose I must beg your pardon for intruding. It did not occur to me that my strolling in might be unwelcome."

Mr. Chandos said nothing to detain him, and Mr. Edwin Barley raised his hat and departed. Mr. Chandos returned the courtesy, and looked after him.

"Who can he be, I wonder? I don't much like his face."

"I think it is the new tenant, sir. I saw him at the house just now."

"*He* the tenant!" returned Mr. Chandos. "Miss Hereford, what is the matter with you? You are as white as that statue."

I turned it off, giving no explanation; and Mr. Chandos walked towards the gate. I daresay I did look white, for the sight of Mr. Edwin Barley brought back all the old horror of the events that had occurred during my sojourn in his house. Not that it was so much the recollection that drove the colour from my cheeks, as the dread fear that he should recognize me; though why I should have feared it, I did not know. Little chance was there of that—had I been calm enough to judge the matter sensibly. While Mr. Edwin Barley had remained stationary in appearance, I had changed from a child into a woman.

But what had brought Mr. Edwin Barley entering as the tenant of that small and inferior house? he, with his fine fortune and his fine estates! There seemed to be mystery enough at Chandos; was this going to be another mystery?

"I believe you must be right, Miss Hereford; he has entered the house," said Mr. Chandos, returning. "If he is really the new tenant—as I suppose he is—he appears by no means a prepossessing one. I wonder what his name may be?"

I could not, for the whole world, have told Mr. Chandos that I knew his name; I could not have told that I knew him. All my hope was that it would never be betrayed that I had known him, that he was any connection of mine, or that he would ever recognize me. What, what could have brought Edwin Barley to Chandos?

(To be continued.)



EASTER WEEK.

BY THE REV. CHARLES KINGSLEY.

SEE the land, her Easter keeping,
Rises as her Maker rose.
Seeds, so long in darkness sleeping,
Burst at last from winter snows.
Earth with heaven above rejoices;
Fields and gardens hail the spring;
Shaughths and woodlands ring with voices,
While the wild birds build and sing.

You, to whom your Maker granted
Powers to those sweet birds unknown,
Use the craft by God implanted;
Use the reason not your own.
Here, while heaven and earth rejoices,
Each his Easter tribute bring—
Work of fingers, chant of voices,
Like the birds who build and sing.

VITTORIA COLONNA.

EVEN in our days of luxurious travelling, there are few modes of visiting foreign lands more delightful than that of the nautical wanderer, who, reclining on the deck of his well-appointed yacht, is wafted each day past shores of ever-changeful form, and ever-changeful beauty. Now, in the dazzling haze of a drowsy southern moon, the vessel glides by a little sapphire bay, whose fairy waves leap up to kiss the boughs of orange groves that sometimes bend down towards them as though they loved the caress, and sometimes, swayed by the wind, start coquettishly away. Now, in breezy twilight, she shoots past a busy town, with its clusters of twinkling lights, and its chimes of bells, and strains of music, that float fitfully in sweet accord across the water. Now, in the pearly glimmer of the rising moon, she flits along a low promontory, where the shadowy crosses of a village cemetery are dimly seen among the dark foliage of olive-yards. Here, a ruined castle, or temple, perched upon a high rock, gives a thoughtful character to the landscape. There, the eye catches a brief glimpse of the brilliant iris that dances amid the sparkling foam of the fountain of a modern villa. The historical student, who is borne in the swift ship of imagination over the vast ocean of time, while he passes in review some series of events long gone by, reminds us much of such a traveller.

Among all the subjects which can be thus examined, and which we may disentangle from the encircling folds of centuries to enchain the interest, or to charm the fancy, there are few more rich, more picturesque, or more pregnant with thought, than the story of Woman. It is not our intention to try to compress within the limits of an article like the present, so wide and suggestive a theme. We only desire to choose out one of the most conspicuous of the figures that crowd the canvas of woman's history, and, if possible, with the light of our modern days, to get a tolerably correct photograph of her.

Independently of her remarkable personal attractions and high mental qualities, Vittoria Colonna claims our especial attention from the prominent part that she played in an epoch which was one of transition, and of peculiar importance to her sex. Vittoria was sprung from one of the most ancient of old Roman patrician families, and an exalted idea of the greatness of her race, and of what was required from a member of it, would be one of the earliest things instilled into her childish mind. When the child began to toddle through the spacious galleries of the Colonna Palace, the grim portraits of her martial fore-

fathers would be among the first objects that excited her mingled wonder and awe. When she sat by her father, the stern old Fabrizio, in the evening quiet of their summer villa, with the sounds of the great city faintly heard in the distance, he would, doubtless, often at once delight and terrify his little daughter by weird and strange tales of deadly herbs gathered by night on the Campagna; of lovers forced by dark spells to forsake the woman most dear to them, and become slaves to the will of some cruel enchantress; of saints rising from their biers to light their own funeral tapers: in all of which histories some lady of the house of Colonna acted the principal part. When she grew to girlhood, her female relatives would be constantly tutoring her as to what might or might not be done by a maiden who had been brought up beneath the august shadow of the grand parental column.

Partly from these thus early conceived ideas, and partly from her own natural proclivities and thoughtful gravity, she preserved throughout her youth a reputation unsullied at a time when such reputations were somewhat rare things in Rome; and in middle age never forgot that she was a princess, even with Michel Angelo. At the period of which we are writing, art (through the presence of Michel Angelo and Raphael in the city) formed, as it were, part of the air of Rome, and it was almost impossible for any one, from the Pope down to the beggar in the streets, to avoid inhaling something of it. It was the fashion for the great Roman nobles to have their houses crowded with artists; and those who frequented the Palazzo Colonna must often (with all the innate love of their class for what is beautiful) have played with and caressed the lovely little Signorina of the mansion. As they turned away for a few moments from toying with the pretty child, to listen to or to answer some professional remark from one of their companions, their words must have given Vittoria her first ideas upon such matters. There was too great a similarity between the characters of Julius II. and Fabrizio Colonna for a very congenial feeling not to exist between the Sovereign Pontiff and his powerful subject. Vittoria must often have visited at the Vatican, to kiss and be blessed by the rough but kindly hands of the warrior Pope, her father's friend. As she came down the Scala Regia, her nurse (following the customs of her class in every age and in every land) may perhaps have turned into the Sistine Chapel, and Vittoria, as her curious childish glances wandered into the interior of the sacred building, may have caught a glimpse of a strange-looking figure, covered all over with many coloured stains of paint, that seemed to be suspended in the air, and to be hanging, back downwards, like a spider from the ceiling. Little did that weary man, depressed by the vastness of his work; by the impetuosity of the fiery Julius; by the want of sympathy of the many; half-blinded by constant gazing upwards in his constrained position; almost worn out in body by want of food and sleep, and yet bearing up by the might of his genius against

all these things—little did that man know how near to him at that moment was the only music that was ever completely to soothe for awhile the ruffled pinions of his soul. Little did Michel Angelo suspect the presence of Vittoria Colonna. No wonder then, that, brought up in days and in a city so devoted to art, Vittoria should afterwards have become the patroness of painters and sculptors. In that age, if a woman read at all, she was obliged to become a deeply read woman. In the nineteenth century, it is quite possible for a woman to rise from reading many books without having one idea more in her head than if she had never left her kitchen or her embroidery; but it was very different in the sixteenth: no such a book as a modern novel then existed.

The Decameron of Boccaccio, and the Orlando Furioso, were the only great fictions of the period; and in these there is a good deal that would make our present novel-readers feel sufficiently drowsy. From this paucity of the literature of their own day it arose that thoughtful women, desirous of food for their minds, were obliged to have recourse to the Classics. Almost as children, the daughters of noble houses were taught Greek and Latin, and often, at a surprisingly early age, attained considerable proficiency in these languages. The luckless ladies, Jane Grey and Arabella Stuart, are remarkable examples in England of such female scholarship; and Vittoria Colonna, if in fortune she was happy enough to be before them, was not far behind them in learning. Even as a girl her pretty mouth could trip through a difficult passage in Thucydides; and her Latin verses still ring out clear and silvery in our ears over the waves of time. At that Papal Court, so remarkable for female loveliness, there were few more beautiful women than Vittoria Colonna, in the days of her prime. Her full and stately figure might have given a sculptor a model for a Juno. Her rich hair, singularly enough for an Italian beauty, was light brown, and tinged with the pale sunshine of the north. Her face, in its massive perfection of feature, and its profound, half-melancholy thoughtfulness, brought to mind the heads of some of the divinities of Ancient Egypt. We know little of Vittoria's unmarried life, except that, though her wit, her rank, and her beauty drew around her all the young gallants of that dissipated Roman Court, she kept the jewel of her reputation as pure as was the enchanted mirror when the fated bride of the Eastern prince looked upon it. She and Michel Angelo must have often met during this period, but we have no evidence of their intimacy having then begun. As a girl, Vittoria was, no doubt, somewhat stiff and shy in manner, and it is hardly likely that she would have made advances towards the reticent, sensitive artist, who never shone in female society, and who, on his side, had she not given him some especial sign of her favour, would never have presumed to approach so exalted a lady. Raphael, however, whose winning and courteous bearing made him always the first man, even in the palace of the proudest noble, and whose strong perception of the rare and the beau-

tiful must have made him keenly sensible to the rich attractions both of her mind and person, most probably often held communion with her. We would give all the dry old official documents preserved in the Vatican for but an outline of some of the passages in their intercourse. We can fancy with what easy grace the mighty artist, who had been so long accustomed to have the almost adoring gaze of all Rome constantly fixed upon him, but who had yet been accustomed also to move beneath that gaze with as much quiet composure as if he had been treading the most common path of private life, approached the young patrician beauty. We can fancy the smile that rested for a moment upon his sweet, intellectual mouth, as he perceived the half-shy, half-dignified manner with which at first she seemed inclined to receive him. We can fancy how he set about to thaw her coldness, until at length, like all other women, she was carried away by his irresistible power—and even the queenly Colonna forgot to be queenly as she listened to Raphael.

Vittoria was eminently lucky in her married life. In that age, as in this, there were narrow-minded men—a disgrace to manhood—who regarded women either merely as they might a beautiful picture or statue, or else as useful machines to do the household work; who would have considered that they were deeply aggrieved, if their wives or sisters had enjoyed the same advantages of education and the same wide range of thought as themselves. Vittoria's husband, the Marquis di Pescara, was not among these men, and, indeed, no great man ever has been amongst them; for in every age, and in every nation, the belief in, and reverence for woman, has been one of the marked attributes of him who conquers on the battle-field, or rules in the State; and of him who, greater still, follows the paths of poetry, of art, or of science, shedding light as he goes on the surrounding people, and on centuries to come.

The Marquis di Pescara was a soldier, a scholar, and a gentleman. He wooed and won his bride with all the devotion of a knight of old. But he also did more than any knight of the Middle Ages would have done. He did not merely adore her as the queen of stately grace and beauty, but he recognized in her a strong intellectual power, which, if it was wanting in the clear judgment of man, made up nevertheless for this defect by a keen subtlety of appreciation, which, in its fineness, excelled every faculty of the kind possessed by masculine minds; and in recognizing this, he recognized the especial mental gift of woman. Hitherto it had been a rare thing to see a woman the centre of a literary circle. Hitherto women had been pre-eminent for the splendour of their jewels, the richness of their robes, or the lustre of their charms, rather than for their intellect. Sometimes their influence in society had consisted in the power which they possessed of drawing and keeping lovers around them. Sometimes they had been merely humoured in every wish, like lovely children whom it was impossible to resist.

Pescara, however, intended for his wife a far higher sovereignty. He at once perceived her peculiar aptitude for being the presiding spirit in an intellectual circle, and he delighted in gathering round her men of letters and of art. In these literary assemblies Vittoria soon lost her girlish shyness, and acquired all that easy dignity, and by degrees also, all that graceful, delicate tact, which afterwards so especially distinguished her. The only drawbacks to the happiness of her union with the Marquis were his frequent absences in the wars which were perpetually devastating Italy. During these solitary periods we catch glimpses of her, wandering among the shadowy groves and arched fountains of her gardens, or sitting in her lofty halls, a lonely stately figure, pouring forth from time to time some tender complaint in melodious verse. These poems are sweet and elegant, and often remarkable for a certain plaintive grace that reminds us of the notes of the widowed nightingale. It is impossible, however, to place her in any very high position as a poetess. Her productions are wanting in originality, and follow too closely the line of thought and expression common among those Italian writers who are of the school of Petrarch. In fact, great as must be our admiration for her talents, we cannot grant her letters of nobility as belonging to the highest order of the aristocracy of intellect; namely, to that of genius. The dim eyes of contemporaries may overlook the badges of that glorious rank, their unskilful tongues may mis-call it; but though too often weary and neglected, struggling against prejudice or poverty, or some physical defect, their actions frequently misconstrued, their fair fame frequently cruelly maligned—though too often in these many ways misused by the world, the sons and daughters of genius have been, and will ever be, a peculiar people, a grade higher than even the rest of the great intellectual family. Mere talent is like the mortal princess who, in the classic tale, stole away the lover of the water-goddess; she is beautiful, but still she is of earth. Genius is like that goddess herself, and suffers not her favourites to serve any more material divinity.

Vittoria Colonna was a woman of much learning and thought, and possessed of a considerable power of expressing herself in verse. But after the lapse of three centuries our chief interest in her poems consists in the fact that some of them refer to, and many of them must have been often read with pleasure by, Michel Angelo. The bright years of Vittoria's married life passed but too quickly away. The Marquis di Pescara was snatched from the world while his wife's beauty was still in its noon-day—while his own manhood was still green. Peace be to his noble spirit! He was a right gallant soldier, and a right worthy gentleman; and woman should speak his name with gratitude for the assistance which he gave to the development of Vittoria Colonna's character. This untimely loss seems to have given a yet more serious cast to Vittoria's already thoughtful mind. She now spent many of her

hours in reading the writings of the early Christian Fathers, and the Holy Scriptures. Though she had always been a devout daughter of the Church of Rome, she could not enter deeply into this latter study without perceiving how little the life led around her in the religious capital of Europe reflected back the teaching of those sacred pages. How was it possible for her to see, hanging on the walls of the churches, lists of the prices at which every imaginable sin might be committed with impunity; how was it possible for her to watch the obsequious crowds assembling at the door of the most powerful person in Rome—the reigning mistress of the Cardinal prime-minister; how was it possible for her to hear at Mass the ignorant, common people say Amen to a prayer which, in a language unknown to them, called down the malediction of heaven on all heretics—without feeling how great was the discord between these things and the fearless adherence to truth, the purity of manners, the gentle, large-hearted doctrine inculcated in the Gospel? In consequence of the partial change thus gradually wrought in her religious opinions, all the men whose writings were coloured with the reformed faith that was taking such deep root in the north of Europe, and who were watched by the Church through the spy-glass of suspicion, began to mingle with poets and artists in the halls of the Palazzo Pescara, when its widowed mistress once more opened her doors to society. It was at this period that Vittoria's intimacy with Michel Angelo first commenced. The great artist, now almost past middle age, had hitherto trodden his grand, solitary path through the world without meeting with one really sympathetic spirit. No woman had ever sat beside his lonely hearth. No hand had yet held his in any warmer grasp than that of ordinary kindness. His person (except for the expression of power in his face) was not attractive, and had been rendered less so by an accident which he had met with in his youth, and which had broken the bridge of his nose. Morbidly sensitive upon this point, he seldom sought female society. It has been supposed that some of his sonnets have reference to an early hopeless attachment which he cherished for a Florentine lady. This circumstance may perhaps account for the little influence which women (until he met Vittoria Colonna) seem to have had on his life.

In common with Vittoria and all the other purer and more thoughtful spirits in Rome, Michel Angelo had begun to perceive the errors and the narrow bigotry of the Church, and to hold in some measure more liberal and enlightened opinions. This fact formed a further bond of union between Pescara's widow and the great Buonarrotti. Seldom has there met together during the world's history such bright and variously composed assemblies as those which gathered at this period around Vittoria. There glowed the pure flame of the reformer's zeal—there sparkled the flash of wit—there blazed the many-coloured rocket of imagination—there shone the steady torch of learning.

Even now, as we gaze up the long avenue of time, we seem to catch a brief view of those wonderful assemblies. Let us hasten to engrave the picture on our page ere it fade away.

It is a sultry Italian noon, and partly for the coolness, partly because the meeting of to-day has a partially religious character, the friends have gathered together in the sacristy of a small church near the Palazzo Pescara, the priest of which is inclined towards the reformed doctrines. There is a soft subdued light in the place, broken only by a few gorgeous sunbeams that fall through the painted glass of the circular window.

First, there is she whose harmonious and queenly influence is the keynote that pitches the tone of thought throughout the whole assembly—first, there is Vittoria di Pescara herself; her stately figure arrayed in the black velvet robes that have been her favourite dress since she became a widow; her face still majestically beautiful, for the lines which time and sorrow have marked upon it seem but as characters written there by thought; her fair hair drawn back beneath her close-fitting, almost nun-like hood. In her hand she holds a volume of lately published poems, the young author of which stands somewhat timidly and awkwardly before her, as she speaks to him words of mingled encouragement and criticism. Near to her leans, with folded arms against a pillar, the man of shabby dress, but regal soul—of spare frame, but large heart—of rugged features, but sublime imagination—of closely-cut black hair, but luxuriantly fertile brain. The young men that crowd around Vittoria cast significant looks towards that deeply meditative countenance, and those eyes which seem to be gazing at some grand vision, visible to him alone, and then, half-smilingly, half-reverently whisper to the Signora that unless she exert her magic power, the lyre of Michel Angelo's genius will be mute among them to-day. But who is she, clad in robes rosy as the morning?—she who reclines on a low seat at Vittoria's knee, with a half-petted air? Who presumes to cast saucy coquetish glances even towards Michel Angelo himself—on whose head the hand of Vittoria rests with almost maternal fondness? She with the mouth such as the fanciful poets of the day loved to sing of as Cupid's perfect bow—she with the dark eyes, that now flash in pride and now sparkle in mirth? She with the brilliantly changeful cheek, and the locks wavy as the tendrils of the young vine?

Well might a Turkish pirate-chief, fired by the stories that had spread through the distant East of that wondrous beauty, come gliding in his swift galley across the moon-lit Mediterranean, to seek to steal her away as she slept in her villa on the sea-shore. Well may all the youth of Rome be in danger of becoming proselytes to the reformed faith, when it is taught by two such preachers as the ready wit and the dazzling loveliness of Giulia di Orsini. Near at hand sits a man of an olive complexion and sharp inquisitive face, who seems to be intently observ-

ing all that is going on. He is a Spaniard, and wishes to take back to his own country an accurate account of the celebrated Italians around him. Little does he think that the journal which he writes each evening for the amusement of his private circle of friends in Madrid, will be discovered by some chance means three centuries after, and that it will be regarded as the well-known text-book of all those who wish to know something of the Rome of that day in its true colours. The rest of the assembly is formed of the most varied ingredients. There are a few middle-aged artists, who, as boys, sat at the feet of Raphael. There are many younger artists who regard each word that falls from Michel Angelo's lips as a jewel dropped from a prince's crown. There are grave professors from the distant universities of Bologna and Padua. There are poets who have heard Ariosto himself read before the Court of the Este. There are scholars who spend their lives in explaining and lecturing upon Dante. There are priests who now wear the vestments of the Roman Catholic Church, but who one day, for the sake of the purer faith they are even now beginning to hold, will wear triumphantly the martyr's robe of flame. Among these men are scattered some of the most highly cultivated and most liberal-minded of the noble ladies of Rome. But hark ! a sound as of a silver chime rings through the sacristy. There is a sudden hush in the assembly. A wonderfully melodious voice is uttering, in the rich Italian tongue, those words which in every language seem fraught with divine music, those words in which the Apostle of the Gentiles portrays the Christian grace of charity. The appearance of the reader does not at first much excite our interest. His person is insignificant. His complexion is sallow, and his black hair long and straight. His hands move about with a sort of nervous twitching. But when he begins to comment on the sacred text a sudden change comes over him. That pallid face is transfigured, as though by the light of a Divine lamp burning within him ; those nervous hands are now raised commandingly, and now extended in passionate supplication. His whole body appears intensified and glorified. Every muscle in his frame seems to be preaching as well as his tongue. His voice strikes every note in the gamut of feeling. The impassible sons and daughters of Rome stir beneath his eloquence, like the ocean beneath the wind. The faces of strong men quiver. Beautiful women bow down their stately heads in silent agitation. The impulsive Giulia hides, sobbing, her face upon Vittoria's breast. Lights and shadows of emotion flit across the majestic countenance of the Signora herself. The finer feelings which Michel Angelo possesses in common with most men of genius, are touched, and a humid mist curtains those inspired eyes. We need not wonder at such emotions, for the preacher is Osceano, the celebrated Neapolitan reformer.

But these assemblies were too soon to be broken up. The Roman Catholic Church, which had slumbered almost carelessly while the trump

of reform had been blown in the North of Europe, now that the unhallowed blast was sounding beneath the very windows of her most sacred temple, had fully awakened to her danger. She comprehended that some prompt and extreme means must be employed to crush out every spark of free religious thought in the Eternal City. For this purpose, therefore, she framed the most iniquitous machinery of oppression that ever was invented by unscrupulous arbitrary power. This machinery was the tribunal of the Holy Inquisition, which was established at this period, in Rome, for the searching out and judging of those inclined towards the reformed doctrines. Too much has been already written and said about this institution to make it necessary for us to dwell upon it. It suffices here to say that the circle which surrounded the Marchioness di Pescara was one of the first subjects of inquisitorial suspicion. From some friendly quarter Vittoria had timely warning of this fact, and at once perceived that she and her friends must either bear the whole weight of the strong arm of this formidable power, or else immediately be dispersed. She chose the latter alternative; and we must pause before we tax her with cowardice for so doing. She was an unprotected woman. She was suffering from feeble health. Her womanly delicacy shrank from the insults, and her womanly weakness from the harsh treatment, to which she might be subjected at the bidding of this new and terrible tribunal. She lamented the errors, and longed for the purification of the Roman Catholic Church; but she had not by any means renounced her communion. That brilliant circle, therefore, never met again, and most of its members left Rome for a time. The ladies withdrew to their villas in the country; the artists and men of letters found it expedient to be seized with a desire for visiting the picture galleries and seats of learning in the north of Italy; Osceano disappeared, and was next heard of, preaching in Calabria; Michel Angelo, however, remained tranquilly in Rome, in the proud assurance that his name alone would suffice to protect him. In truth, all Italy would have risen up as one man against the Papacy, had it presumed to touch with a rough hand her great son. The shadow which her husband's untimely death had cast over Vittoria's life, but which the brightest intellectual society had in some measure dispelled, now began (increased probably by the low spirits attendant on ill-health) to close more darkly than ever round her. Partly to satisfy the desire for retirement which this frame of mind produced within her, and partly to quiet the suspicions of the Church, she left Rome and took up her residence in a convent at Viterbo. There she passed the greatest portion of the remaining years of her life; her time being chiefly employed in theological studies, in meditation, and in works of charity.

She seldom again saw Michel Angelo, but her correspondence with him during this period, some of which is extant, sufficiently proves that her friendship for him did not fade with absence. She had grown no

narrow-minded recluse. Her fancy was still alive to intellectual pleasures, and her heart to social sympathies.

The end came, at length, to Vittoria, very calmly and very brightly, before age had laid his hand upon her, before the slightest decay had touched the fine powers of her mind. The lamps of soul and of intellect burned on clearly and steadily till the last, and then were gently removed by the hand of Almighty Love to shine in a purer atmosphere with a far more perfect brightness. Michel Angelo stood beside her a short time before the end, and this is all we ask to know of that scene.

Long after, a little while before his own death, he regretted to one of his favourite pupils that in that last farewell he had not pressed his lips upon her brow instead of her hand. The remembrance of so small a fact by the great lonely old man after the lapse of so many years, that had been so fruitful for him in grand works and in grand honours, has to us in it something almost too touching for words to dwell upon. So lived and so died Vittoria Colonna, having done gloriously woman's two chief duties, of making beautiful and of harmonizing the world. We have but to read her story to comprehend the grievous folly of those who speak of high mental cultivation as unnecessary, nay, as almost prejudicial to women, and to feel how much we owe to those who would open to them every branch of learning. The old poets loved to sing of heroines, who now conquered, irresistible in arms, in the field of battle, and now shone with every seductive charm in brilliant halls. In the same way strength of intellect may and ought to exist in woman, with all the softer social graces.

ALICE KING.



ANOTHER CHANCE.

I STAND on the shore of the swift blue river,
And watch the winds and the waves at play;
And still as I watch, the waves for ever
Slip from my gaze, and glide away.
"Stay, soft wind, and stand, fair river,
And leave me never, thou perfect day;"
And, still as I ask, the hours for ever
Slip from my life, and glide away.
The waves go by till my eyes are weary,
They will not tarry nor turn again;
"Life, new life," is their chorus cheery,
"That strange new life in the vast blue main."
My days go by till I stand despairing,
For those were evil and these are vain;
Yet hope, my heart, for the time is nearing
When I may try my life again.

WATCHING ON ST. MARK'S EVE.

EASTER DAY that year was nearly as late as it could be—the 23rd of April. That brought St. Mark's Day (the 25th) on the Tuesday; and Easter Monday was St. Mark's Eve.

There is a superstitious belief in our county, and in some others—more thought of in our old grannies' days than in these—that if you go to the churchyard on St. Mark's Eve and watch the gate, the shadows, or phantoms, of those fated to die that year, and destined there to be buried, will be seen to enter it.

Easter Monday is a great holiday with us; the greatest in all the year. Christmas Day and Good Friday are looked upon more in a religious light; but on Easter Monday servants and labourers think themselves at liberty to take their swing. The first day of the wake is nothing to it.

Now Squire Todhetley gave in to these holidays: they did not come often, he said. Our servants in the country are not a bit like yours in town; yours want a day's holiday once a month, oftener sometimes, and strike if they don't get it; ours have one or two in a year. On Easter Monday the work was got over by mid-day; there was no cooking, and the household could roam abroad at will. No ill had ever come of it; none would have come of it this time, but for St. Mark's Eve falling on the day.

Tod and I got home from school on the Thursday. It was a despicable old school, taking no heed of Passion Week. Other fellows from other schools could have a fortnight at Easter; we but a week. Tod entered on a remonstrance with the Pater this time; he had been planning it as we drove home, and thought he'd put it in a strongish point of view.

"It is sinful, you know, sir; awfully so. Passion Week *is* Passion Week. We have no right to pass it at school at our desks."

"Well, Joe, I don't quite see that," returned the Pater, twisting his lip. "Discipline and lessons are more in accordance with the season of Passion Week than kicking up your heels at large in all sorts of mischief; and that's what you'd be at, you know, if you were at home. What's the matter with Johnny?"

"He has been ill for three days, with a cold or something," said Tod. "Tell it for yourself, Johnny."

I had no more to tell than that. For three or four days I had felt ill, feverish; yesterday (Wednesday) had done no lessons. Mrs. Tod-

hetley thought it was an attack of influenza. She sent me to bed, and called in the doctor, Mr. Duffham.

I was better the next day—Good Friday. Old Duff—as Tod and I called him for short—came in while they were at church, and said I might get up. It was slow work, I told him, lying in bed for one's holidays. He was a wiry little man, with black hair; good in the main, but pompous, and always carried a gold-headed cane.

"Not to go out, you know," he said. "You must promise that, Johnny."

I promised readily. I only wanted to be downstairs with the rest. They returned home from church, saying they had promised to go over and take tea with the Sterlings; Mrs. Todhetley looked grave at seeing me, and thought the doctor was wrong. At which I put on a gay air, like a fellow suddenly cured.

But I could not eat any dinner. They had salt fish and cold boiled beef at two o'clock—our usual way of fasting on Good Friday. Not a morsel could I swallow, and Hannah brought me some mutton-broth.

"Do you mind our leaving you, Johnny?" Mrs. Todhetley said to me in her kind way—which Tod never believed in. "If you do—if you think you shall feel lonely, I'll stay at home."

I answered that I should feel very jolly, not lonely at all; and so they started, going over in the large carriage, drawn by Bob and Blister. Mr. and Mrs. Todhetley, with Lena, in front, Tod and Hugh behind. Standing at the window to watch the start, I saw Roger Monk looking on from the side of the house.

He was a small, white-faced chap of twenty or so, with a queer look in his eyes, and black sprouting whiskers. Looking full at the eyes, when you could get the chance, which was not very often, for they rarely looked at you, there was nothing wrong to be seen with them, and yet they gave a sinister cast to the face. Perhaps it was that they were too near together. Roger Monk was not one of our regular men; for the matter of that, he was above the condition; but was temporarily filling the head-gardener's place, who was ill with rheumatism. Seeing me, he walked up to the window, and I opened it to speak to him. "Are you here still, Monk?"

"And likely to be, Mr. Ludlow, if it depends upon Jenkins's coming on again," was the answer; and I wondered how he came to have my name so pat. In doors I was Johnny always, and strangers invariably took me for a Todhetley. "Fine cattle, those that the governor has just driven off."

He meant Bob and Blister, and they were fine; but I did not like the tone, or the word "governor," as applied to Mr. Todhetley. "I can't keep the window up," I said; "I'm not well."

"All right, sir; shut it. As for me, I must be about my work. There's enough to do with the gardens, one way or another; and the responsibility lies on my shoulders."

"You must not work to-day, Monk. Squire Todhetley never allows it on Good Friday."

He laughed pleasantly; as much as to say, what Squire Todhetley allowed, or did not allow, was no concern of his; and went briskly away across the lawn. And not once, during the short interview, had his eyes met mine.

Wasn't it dull that afternoon! I took old Duffham's physic, and drank the tea Hannah brought me, and was hot, and restless, and sick. Never a soul to talk to; never a book to read—my eyes and head ached too much for that; never a voice to be heard. Most of the servants were out; all of them, for what I knew, except Hannah; and I was fit to die of weariness. At dusk I went up to the nursery. Hannah was not there. The fire was raked—if you understand what that means, though it is generally applied only to kitchen fires in our county—which proved that she was off somewhere on a prolonged expedition. Even old Hannah's absence was a disappointment. I threw myself down on the faded sofa at the far end of the room, and, I suppose, went to sleep.

For when I became alive again to outward things, Hannah was seated in one chair at the fire, cracking up the coal; Molly, the cook with the sharp tongue and red-brown eyes, in another. It was dark and late; my head ached awfully, and I wished them and their clatter somewhere. They were talking of St. Mark's Eve, and its popular superstition. Molly was telling a tale of the past, the beginning of which I had not heard.

"I can't believe it," exclaimed Hannah; "I can't believe that the shadows come."

"Did ye ever watch for 'em, woman?" asked Molly, who had been born in the North.

"No," acknowledged Hannah.

"Then how can ye speak of what ye don't know? It is as true as that you and me be a-sitting here. Two foolish, sickly girls they was, both of 'em sweet upon the same young man. Leastways, he was sweet upon both of them, the deceiver, which comes to the same thing. My sister Becky was five-and-twenty that same year; she had a constant pain and a cough, which some said was windpipe and some said was liver. The other was Mary Clarkson, who was subject to swim-mings in the head and frightful dartings. Any way, they'd got no health to brag on, either of 'em, and they were just eat up with jealousy, the one of the other. Tom Town, he knew this; and he played 'em off again' each other nicely, little thinking what his own punishment was to be."

Hannah gently put the poker inside the bars to raise the coal, and some more light came out. Molly went on.

"Now, Hannah, you mustn't think bad of them two young women.

They did not wish one another dead—far from it ; but each thought the other couldn't live. In natural course, if the one went off, poor thing, Tom Town, he would be left undivided for the other."

"Was Tom Town handsome?" interrupted Hannah.

"Well, middling for that. He was under-sized, not up to their shoulders, with big bushy red whiskers ; but he had a taking way with him. He was in a shop for himself, and doing well, so that more young women nor the two I am telling of would have said Yes to his asking. Becky, she thought Mary Clarkson couldn't live the year out ; Mary, she told a friend that she was sure Becky wouldn't. And what should they do but go to watch the graveyard on St. Mark's Eve, to see the other's shadow pass !"

"Together?"

"No ; but they met there. Awk'ard, wasn't it? Calling up their wits, each of 'em, they pretended to have come out promiskous, just on the spree, not expecting to see nobody's shadow in particular. As they *had* come, they stopped ; standing back again, the hedge near the graveyard, holding on to each other's arms for company, and making belief not to be scared. Hannah, woman, I don't care to tell this. I've never told it many times."

Molly's face had a hard, solemn look, in the fire's blaze, and Hannah suddenly drew her chair close to her. I could have laughed out loud.

"Just as the clock struck—ten, I think it was," went on Molly, in a half whisper, "there was a faint rustle heard, like a flutter in the air, and somebody came along the road. At first the women's eyes were dazed, and they didn't see distinct, but as the gate opened to let him in, he turned his face, and they saw it was Tom Town. Both the girls thought it was *himself*, Hannah ; and they held their breath and kept quite still, hoping he'd not notice them, for they'd have felt ashamed to be caught watching there.

"And it was not himself?" asked Hannah, catching up her breath.

Molly gave her head a shake. "No more than it was you or me : it was his shadow. He walked on up the path, looking neither to the right nor left, and they lost sight of him. I was with mother when they came home. Mary Clarkson, she came in with Beck, and they said they had seen Tom Town, and supposed he had gone out watching, too. Mother advised them to hold their tongues : it didn't look well, she said, for them two, only sickly young girls, to have run out to the graveyard alone. A short while after, Tom Town, in talking of that night, mother having artfully led to it, said he had gone up to bed at nine with a splitting headache, and forgot all about its being St. Mark's Eve. When mother heard that, she turned the colour o' chalk, and looked round at me."

"And Tom Town died?"

"He died that blessed year; the very day that folks was eating their Michaelmas geeses. A rapid decline took him off."

"It's very strange," said Hannah, musingly. "People believe here that the shadows appear, and folks used to go watching, as it's said. I don't think many go now. Did the two young women die?"

"Not they. Becky's married, and got half-a-dozen children; and Mary Clarkson, she went off to America. Shouldn't you like to watch?"

"Well, I should," acknowledged Hannah; "I would, too, if I thought I should see anything. I've said more than once in my life that I should just like to go out on St. Mark's Eve, and see whether there is anything in it or not. My mother went, I know."

"If you'll go, I'll go."

Hannah made no answer to this at first. She sat looking at the fire with a cross face. It had always a cross look when she was deep in thought. "The mistress would think me such a fool, Molly, if she came to know of it."

"If! How could she come to know of it? Next Monday will be the Easter holidays, and we mayn't never have the opportunity again. I shouldn't wonder but the lane's full o' watchers. St. Mark's Eve don't often come on a Easter Monday."

There's no time to go on with what they said. A good half-hour the two sat there, laying their plans: when once Hannah had decided to go in for the expedition, she made no more bones over it. The nursery windows faced the front, and when the carriage was heard driving in, they both decamped downstairs—Hannah to the children, Molly to her kitchen. I found Tod, and told him the news: Hannah and Molly were going to watch in the churchyard for the shadows on St. Mark's Eve.

"We'll have some fun over this, Johnny," said he, when he had done laughing. "You and I will be on to them."

Monday came; and, upon my word, it seemed as if things turned out on purpose. Mr. Todhetley went off to Worcester with Dwarf Giles, on some business connected with the Quarter Sessions, and was not expected home until midnight, as he stayed to dine at Worcester. Mrs. Todhetley had one of her excruciating face-aches, and she went to bed when the children did—seven o'clock. Hannah had said in the morning that she and Molly were going to spend an hour or two with Goody Picker after the children were in bed; upon which Mrs. Todhetley told her to get them to bed early. It was something rare for Hannah to take any holiday; she generally said she did not want it. Goody Picker's husband used to be a gamekeeper—not ours. Since his death she lived how she could, on her vegetables, or by letting her odd room: Roger Monk had it now. Sometimes she had her grandchild with her; and the parents, well-to-do shop-keepers at Alcester, paid her well.

Goody Picker was thought well of at our house, and came up occasionally to have tea in the nursery with Hannah.

I was well by Monday; nothing but a bit of a cough left; and Tod and I looked forward to the night's fun. Not a word had we heard since; but we had seen the two women-servants whispering together whenever they got the chance; and so we knew they were going. What Tod meant to do, he wouldn't tell me; I think he hardly knew himself. The big turnips were all gone, or he might have scooped one out for a death's head and stuck it on the gate-post, with a candle in it.

The night came. A clear night, with a miserable moon. Miserable for our sport, because it was so bright.

"A pitch-dark night would have had some sense in it, you know, Johnny," Tod remarked to me, as we stood at the door, looking out "The moon should hide her face on St. Mark's Eve."

Just as he spoke, the clock struck nine. Time to be going. There was nobody to let or hinder us. Mrs. Todhetley was in bed groaning with the toothache; old Thomas and Phœbe, neither of whom had cared to take holiday, were at supper in the kitchen. She was a young girl lately had in to help the housemaid.

"You go on, Johnny; I'll follow presently. Take your time; they won't go on the watch for this half-hour yet."

"But, Tod, what is it that you are going to do?"

"Never you mind. If you hear a great noise, and see a light blaze up, don't you be scared."

"I scared, Tod! That's good."

"All right, Johnny. Take care not to be seen. It might spoil sport."

The church was about half a mile from our house, whether you crossed the fields to it or took the highway. It stood back from the road, in its big churchyard. A narrow lane, between two dwarf hedges, led up from the road to the gate; it was hardly wide enough for carriages; they wound round the open road further on. A cross-path, shut in by two stiles, led right across the lane near to the churchyard gate. Stories went that a poor fellow who had hung himself about twenty years ago was buried by torchlight under that very crossing, with never a parson to say a prayer over him.

We guessed where the women would stand—at one of these crossing stiles, with the gate and the churchyard in full view. As Tod said, it stood to reason that shadows and the watchers for them would not choose the broader road, where all was open, and not so much as a tree grew for shelter.

I stole along cautiously, taking the roadway and keeping under shade of the hedge, and got there all right. Not a creature was about. The old grey church, built of stone, the many-shaped graves in the

churchyard, stood white and cold in the moonlight. I went behind the cross-stile at the side furthest from our house, and leaned over it, looking up and down the lane. That the women would be on the opposite side was certain, because the churchyard gate could not be seen so well from this.

The old clock did not tell the quarters, only struck the hour; time went on, and I began to wonder how long I was to wait. It must be turned half-past nine; getting nearer to a quarter to ten; and still nobody came. Where were the watchers? And where was Tod? The shadows of the trees, of the hedges, of the graves, fell in distinct lines on the grass; and I don't mind confessing that it felt uncommonly lonely.

"Hou-ou-ou-ou-ou-ou-ou!" burst forth over my head with a sudden and unearthly sound. I started back in a fright for one moment, and called myself an idiot the next, for it was only an owl. It had come flying forth from the old belfry, and went rushing on with its great wings, crying still, but changing its note. "Tu-whit; tu-whoo."

And while I watched the owl, other sounds, as of whispering, made themselves manifest, heralding the approach of the women from the opposite field, making for the stile in front of me, through the little copse. Drawing behind the low hedge, to sit down on the stump of a tree, I pushed my head forward, and took a look at them through the lower bars of the stile. They were standing at the other, in their light shawls and new Easter straw-bonnets; Molly's trimmed with green, Hannah's with primrose. The moonlight fell full on their faces—mine was in the shade. But they might see me, and I drew back again.

Presently they began to gabble; in low tones at first, which increased, perhaps unconsciously to themselves, to higher ones. They said how lonely it was, especially with "them grave-marks" in view close by; and they speculated upon whether any shadows would appear to them. My sense of loneliness had vanished. To have two practical women, each of them a good five-and-thirty, for neighbours, took it off. But I wondered what had become of Tod.

Another owl! or perhaps the last one coming back again. It was not so startling a noise as before, and created no alarm. I thought it a good opportunity to steal another look, and propelled my head forward an inch at a time. Their two faces were turned upwards, watching the owl's flight towards the belfry.

But to my intense astonishment there was a *third* face. A face behind them peeping out from the close folds of a mantle, and almost resting on their shoulders. At the first moment I thought of Tod; but soon the features became familiar to me in the bright light, and I knew them for Phœbe's. Phœbe, whom I had left in the kitchen, supping quietly! That she had stolen up unseen and unheard while they talked, was apparent.

A wild screech ! Two wild screeches. Phoebe had put her hands on the startled women, and given vent to a dismal groan. *She* laughed ; but the others went into a desperate passion. First at having been frightened, next at having been followed. When matters came to be investigated later, it turned out that Phoebe had overheard a conversation between Molly and Hannah, which betrayed what they were about to do, and had come on purpose to startle them.

A row ensued. Bitter words on both sides ; mutual abusings. The elder servants ordered Phoebe home ; she refused to go, and gave them some sauce. She intended to stay and see what there was to be seen, she said ; for all she could tell, *their* shadows might pass, and a good thing if they did ; let alone that she'd not dare to go back by herself at that hour and meet the ghosts. Hannah and Molly cut the matter short by leaving the stile to her ; they went round, and took up their places by the churchyard gate.

It seems very stupid to be writing of this, I dare say ; it must read like an old ghost-story out of a fable-book ; but every word is true, as the people that lived round us then could tell you.

There we waited ; Hannah and Molly gathered close against the hedge by the churchyard gate ; Phoebe, wrapped in her shawl, leaning on the top of the stile ; I on the old tree's stump, feeling inclined to go to sleep. It seemed a long time, and the night grew cold. Evidently there were no watchers for St. Mark's shadows abroad that night, except ourselves. Without warning, the old clock boomed out the strokes of the hour. Ten.

Did you ever have the opportunity of noticing how long it takes for a sound like this to die quite away on the calm night air ? I seemed to hear it still, floating off in the distance, when I became aware that some figure was advancing up the lane towards us with a rather swift step. It's Tod this time, I thought, and naturally looked out ; and I don't mind telling that I caught hold of the bars of the stile for companionship, in my shock of terror.

I had never seen the dead walking ; but I do believe I thought I saw it then. It looked like a corpse in its winding-sheet ; whether man or woman, none could tell. An ashey-white, still, ghastly face, enveloped around with bands of white linen, was turned full to the moonlight, that played upon the rigid features. The whole person, from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, was enshrouded in a white garment. All thoughts of Tod went out of me ; and I'm not sure but what my hair rose up on end as the thing came on. You may laugh at me, all of you, but just you go and try it.

My fear went for nothing, however ; it didn't damage me. Of all the awful cries ever heard, shrill at first, changing to something like the barking of a dog afterwards, those were the worst that arose opposite. They came from Phoebe. The girl had stood petrified, with straining

eyes and laboured breath, like one who has not the power to fly, while the thing advanced. Only when it stopped close and looked at her did the pent-up cries come forth. Then she turned to fly, and the white figure leaped the stile, and went after her into the copse. What immediately followed I cannot remember—never could remember it; but it seemed that not more than a minute had elapsed when I and Molly and Hannah were standing over Phœbe, lying in convulsions on the ground, and the creature nowhere to be seen. The cries had been heard in the road, and some people passing came running up. They lifted the girl in their arms, and bore her homewards.

My senses were coming to me, showing plainly enough that it was no "shadow," but some ill-starred individual dressed up to personate one. Poor Phœbe! I could hear her cries still, though the group was already out of the copse and crossing the open field beyond. Somebody touched me on the shoulder.

"Tod! Did you do it?"

"Do what?" asked Tod, who was out of breath with running. "What was all that row?"

I told him. Somebody had made himself into a ghost, with a tied-up whitened face, just as the dead have, and came up the Green Lane in a sheet; and Phœbe was being carried home in convulsions.

"You are a fool, Johnny," was his wrathful answer. "I am not one to risk a thing of that sort, not even for those two old women we came out to frighten. Look here."

He went to the edge of the copse near the road, and showed me some things—the old pistol from the stable, and gunpowder lights that went off with a crash yards high. It's not of much use going into it now. Tod had meant, standing at a safe distance, to set a light to the explosive articles, and fire off his pistol at the same time.

"It would have been so good to see the women scutter off in their fright, Johnny; and it couldn't have hurt them. They might have looked upon it as the blue-light from below."

"What made you so late?"

"Late!" returned Tod, savagely; "I am late, and the fun's spoilt. That confounded old Duff and his cane came in to see you, Johnny, just as I was starting; there was nobody else, and I couldn't leave him. I said you were a-bed and asleep, but it didn't send him away. Down he sat, telling a tale of how hard-worked he'd been all day, and asking for brandy-and-water. The dickens take him!"

"And, Tod, it was really not you?"

"If you repeat that again, Johnny, I'll strike you. I swear it was not me. There! I never told you a lie yet."

He never had; and from that moment of strong denial I knew that Tod had no more to do with the matter than I had.

"I wonder who it could have been?"

"I'll find that out, as sure as my name's Todhetley," he said, catching up his pistols and lights.

We ran all the way home, looking out in vain for the ghost on our way, and got in almost as soon as the rest. What a hullabaloo it was ! They put a mattress on the kitchen floor, and laid Phoebe on it. Mr. Duffham was upon the scene in no time ; the Squire had returned earlier than was thought for, and Mrs. Todhetley came down with her face smothered in a woollen handkerchief.

As to any concealment now, it was useless to think of it. None was attempted, and Molly and Hannah had to confess that they went out to watch for the shadows. The Squire blustered at them a little, but Mrs. Todhetley said the keenest thing, in her mild way :

"At your age, Hannah !"

"I have known a person rendered an idiot for life with a less fright than this," said old Duff, turning round to speak. "It was the following her that did the mischief."

Nothing could be done that night as to investigation ; but with the morning the Squire entered upon it in hot anger. "Couldn't the fool have been contented with what he'd already done, without going over the stile after her ? If I spend a fifty-pound note, I'll unearth him. It looks to me uncommonly like a trick you two boys would play," he added, turning sharply upon me and Tod.

And the suspicion made us all the more eager to find out the real fox. But not a clue could we discover. Nobody had known of the proposed expedition except Goody Picker ; and she, as everybody testified, was true to the backbone. As the day went on, and nothing came of it, Tod had one of his stamping fits.

"If one could find out whether it was man or woman ! If one could divine how they got at the knowledge !" stamped Tod. "The Pater does not look sure about us yet."

"I wonder if it could have been Roger Monk ?" I said, speaking out a thought that had been dimly creeping up in my mind by starts all day.

"Roger Monk !" repeated Tod, "why pitch upon him ?"

"Only that it's just possible he might have got it out of Goody Picker."

Away went Tod, in his straightforward fashion, to look for Roger Monk. He was in the hot-house, doing something to his plants.

"Monk, did you play that trick last night ?"

"What trick, sir ?" asked Monk, twitching a good-for-nothing leaf off a budding geranium.

"What trick ! As if there were more tricks than one played ! I mean dressing yourself up like a dead man and frightening Phoebe."

"I have too much to do with my work, Mr. Todhetley, to find time to play tricks. I took no holiday at all yesterday, day or night, but was about my business till I went to bed. They were saying out here this morning that the Squire thought *you* had done it."

"Don't you be insolent, Monk. That won't answer with me."

"Well, sir, it is not pleasant to be accused point-blank of a crime, as you've just accused me. I know nothing at all about the matter. 'Twasn't me. I had no grudge against Phoebe, that I should harm her."

Tod was satisfied; I was not. He never once looked in either of our faces as he was speaking. We leaped the wire-fence and went across to Goody Picker's, bursting into her kitchen without ceremony.

"I say, Mrs. Picker, we can't find out anything about that business last night," began Tod.

"And you never will, gentlemen, as is my opinion," returned Mrs. Picker, getting up in a bustle and dusting two wooden chairs. "Whoever did that, have took himself off for a bit; never doubt it. 'Twas some one o' them village lads."

"We have been wondering whether it was Roger Monk."

"Lawk-a-mercy!" cried she, dropping a basin on the brick floor. And if ever I saw a woman change colour, she did.

"What's the matter now?"

"Why you sent me into a tremble, gentlemen, saying that," she answered, stooping to pick up the broken crockery. "A young man lodging in my place, do such a villain's trick! I'd not like to think it; I shouldn't rest in my bed. The two servants having started right out from here for the churchyard have cowed-down my heart bad enough, without more ill news."

"What time did Monk come in last night?" questioned Tod. "Do you remember?"

"He come in after Mrs. Hannah and the other had gone," she replied, taking a moment's pause. "Close upon it; I'd hardly shut my door on them when I had to open it to him."

"Did he go out again?"

"Not he, sir. He eat his supper, telling me in a grumbling tone about the extra work he'd had to do in the greenhouses and places, because the other man had took holiday best part o' the day. And then he went up to bed. Right tired he seemed."

We left her fitting the pieces of the basin together, and went home. "It wasn't Monk," said Tod. "But now—where to look for the right man, Johnny?"

Look as we might, we did not find him. Phoebe was better in a day or two, but the convulsive fits stuck to her, coming on at all sorts of unexpected times. Old Duff thought it might end in insanity.

And that's what came of Watching for the Shadows on St. Mark's Eve!

JOHNNY LUDLOW.

AUNT FÉLICITÉ.

A NORMAN STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CHARLOTTE BURNEY," &c.

MARKET was nearly over in the Place St. Blaize. A few hardy old veterans still kept their position, but by far the greater number of sellers had stowed away their unsold merchandise, shut up their camp-stools, and furled their gay-coloured umbrellas. Many had already seated themselves in the lumbering, picturesque carts which had brought them in from some neighbouring village—the place their stalls had occupied to be known by a heap of pea-shucks and bean-shreddings, and other vegetable refuse blistering under the intense August sunshine.

The scene round the beautiful old church of St. Blaize was as great a contrast to that which had presented itself earlier in the morning as that which the dressing-room of a beauty after a ball, strewn with discarded finery, offers to the perfection of grace and beauty the very same adornments realized on her person. So thought a fair, handsome Englishman who had been turning the heads of all the pretty market-girls by sketching them, driving the ugly ones half mad with envy.

If any fellow-artist had looked over Arthur Seton's shoulder, he must have wondered why he had spent all the morning in and about the old market-place. He could not be studying effect: everything was in too broad a glare of sunshine. There were the quaint sculptured dormers of the Bourse, and the projecting high-peaked gables of the many-storied houses which faced him as he leaned against the crumbling wall of the gray church; but had the said fellow-artist turned a few pages back, he would have found rough notes in plenty.

He might have been studying colour from the picturesque skirts and jackets and bright-coloured head and neckerchiefs of the women, or from their umbrellas, ranging from rosy scarlet to brilliant green, or, more likely still, from the slanting masses of golden apricots, blushing peaches, plums, and many-hued pears—the melon, sold for "vingt centimes la pièce," tempting alike scent, taste, and sight by the rich colour the gash in its side revealed.

But it was not for this, or he would not have lingered now that all the fruit had disappeared; leaving behind it a faint odour which, mingling with the decaying refuse, made the market-place unsavoury.

After a while, Mr. Seton seemed to find this out, for he left the position he had kept so long near the fruit-stalls, and crossing to the Bourse side of the Place, leant down over the flowers, drawn up in serried rows on the pavement.

"Will monsieur buy a bouquet pour sa dame?"

An old woman with a brown wrinkled face, which looked as if some one had given it a screw in the middle, held him out a nosegay of cloves, jasmines, and mignonette. He could not help buying it.

"But it is for me," he said, laughing. "I have no belle dame to buy bouquets for."

"Ah ça," she shrugged her shoulders—"un beau monsieur like you can never be in want of some one to give flowers to." She stopped, and crossed herself devoutly: then, with a half-doubting look, "There is always the Holy Virgin. Are you heretic, eh?" she said, sharply. "It is a pity: you are too well-made to be prey for the devil."

Seton pulled out his whiskers, and laughed. He was very handsome, and possessed an air of quiet distinction. His very indolence of manner gave a repose to his movements. He never did anything hurried or awkward, but he gave a slight start now as a young girl came up to the flower-stalls. She started also; a file of women passing to their carts with baskets on their heads had kept these two from the sight of each other.

Seton raised his hat, and then the girl bowed timidly. She was interesting-looking: a pale, transparent skin, with great dark eyes, full of expression; the blush that came as she recognized Arthur made her lovely. Her long dark lashes almost touched her glowing cheeks at the flower-woman's next words, "Ah ça, mon beau monsieur, do you know Mademoiselle Geneviève? Ah ciel! how men tell stories! you said a minute ago that you knew no belle dame to offer flowers to. Ma chérie, I began to think thou wert not coming to see the old bonne. Thou wouldst have come, my child; but how could I know that the aunt would allow it, as I had seen thee at home this morning?"

Seton had drawn a little back as the old woman put her brown hands on the girl's shoulders, and kissed her forehead. Geneviève seemed to recover when she found herself talking to her old servant.

"Bah!—and suppose I did not ask the aunt? It is only when she is away from home that I may not go out and market for her. I go on other days, and why not on this? Elodie, you grow silly."

"C'est bien, mon enfant." Elodie gave her a look of intense admiration, and then she turned again to Seton. "How long have you known Mademoiselle, mon beau monsieur? She belongs to me, you know. She is mon enfant de lait. Is she not a child to be proud of?"

Geneviève blushed, but she looked angry. Seton thought she was turning away, and he spoke, raising his hat, almost with reverence:

"I have not the honour of knowing your mistress," he said to Elodie. "Mademoiselle and I are neighbours, and have only seen each other by chance." He paused; Geneviève had raised her eyes; she looked timid again, but no longer angry. He went on, "If she will permit me, I shall be proud to offer her your sweet flowers."

She took the nosegay very unwillingly, he thought, and she looked inclined to give it back, when the old woman said:

"Don't tell the aunt anybody gave them to thee; they grew in Elodie's garden, that is all. *Mon beau monsieur*," she went on, warned by a frown on Geneviève's gentle face, "you must take yourself off: my child and I have words to speak which are not for you."

Seton looked at Geneviève, but she gave him no encouragement to remain. He pocketed his sketch-book as leisurely as possible, and with a bow, first to the mistress and then to the old servant, he lounged up the hilly street that leads to the ruined Norman bastions of what was once the Castle of St. Roque.

It was very hot, and he was tired, but he did not stop till he reached the closely cropped grass on the ramparts. Then he flung himself down, startling a flock of tortoiseshell butterflies only just hatched, who had been settling on the clover blossoms on which he now rested.

Seton looked lazily after the insects, as they flew here and there, attracted first by one blossom, then by another; an incessant flutter of brown and blue and gold.

"Upon my soul, I am not much better than a butterfly. I came to this place for two days at the outside, and I've been here ten. Why don't I go? Ah! there it is. If I go now, I'm afraid I shall leave something belonging to me which I can't very well spare. Confound it! why am I such a soft-hearted fool? Can't I listen to a sweet voice and look at a sweet face, but I must straightway want it for my own? Yes, that is what I do want. Geneviève—I never knew her name before—it suits her exactly. I want to have those eyes of hers looking into mine, and to hear that voice of hers telling me she loves me, and that she never could love anybody else. What a voice it is!"

In England, Mr. Seton was a welcome guest in what is called "society;" he had kept heart-whole there; but now he had fallen a victim to this disease of love, because his ears had listened to the singing of the loveliest voice he had ever heard, and twice each day he had seen the singer's charming face for a few minutes at the window opposite his room at the Hôtel de Paris. He knew nothing else about her. He had found out the house at the back window of which he had seen her, but there was nothing to be learnt there. He had knocked, and asked who lived in the particular house that interested him, but the door was opened by a child, who seemed unable to understand his rather British French. "*Maman est sortie*," was all the answer he

could extract ; and at the shops, they shrugged their shoulders, and knew nothing about people who lived in the Rue Puits d'Amour.

It was a terrible fact—and Seton knew it ; he had fallen headlong into a passion for a girl of whom he knew nothing. Her face, her whole conduct, vouched for her purity ; until to-day he had not even spoken to her, for she left her window almost as soon as he appeared at his ; and he had not succeeded till this morning in meeting her in the street, spite of the incessant watch he kept on her movements.

Suddenly a new idea quickened within him—he would go back to the market-place and find old Elodie ; he should learn from her all he wanted to know. He sprang up, and hastened down the slippery grass-slope with a speed that made him inclined to smile at himself.

The market-place was empty ; a few ragged children were prowling among the refuse ; a few dropped flowers marked where Elodie's flower-pots had stood, but she and her donkey-cart had departed.

Mademoiselle Félicité Trudin was still a very handsome woman—though at thirty-five a Frenchwoman is older than is an Englishwoman at the same epoch, especially when she is of Félicité's type. Large deep brown eyes, regular features, a clear olive skin, and abundant braids of glossy hair, made a picture-face, to which the depth of passionate expression gave brilliant effects of light and shade.

The shade predominated as she sat by her bedroom window, resting her cheek on the slender fingers of one hand, while the other played with the braid chain suspended from her neck.

The annoyance that shadowed her came from within ; outwardly there was only what she looked on every day—a bricked court-yard below, half built over by the one-storied rooms of her lodgers, a tailor and his family. The leaded roof of their apartment Mademoiselle used as a flower-garden ; and across it she could have walked, had she chosen, into the first-floor back windows of the Hôtel de Paris.

Her look-out was not half so picturesque and varied as that of the English tourists and French families bound for "les eaux," who chanced to sojourn in this pleasant little hotel, in one of the most charming and cleanest of Norman towns.

She saw nothing but tiers of windows opening one above another, with their muslin draperies and clumsy fastenings—monotonous compared with the variety opposite. To begin with the court-yard. Monsieur and Madame Leroux might be seen in early morning in various stages of their toilette, and on two days of the week stockings and garments, many-coloured and multiform, hung from strings stretched, zig-zag fashion, from the sides of the leads to the wall opposite. The leads themselves were rich in colour. Mademoiselle Félicité loved flowers, and knew how to grow them too. Her oleanders and scarlet geraniums did her credit, and her myrtles and fuchsias, those

strange contrasts of blossoms, would have raised the envy of an English gardener.

The interior of her chamber was dingy-looking enough from the hotel (for Mademoiselle Félicité was fond of air, and kept her windows open till she went to bed). A white crucifix showed in one corner, and over that, on a bracket, a gorgeously-clad, crowned Madonna ; but all else was too sombre in tint to be easily made out. The upper story must have been rented by a laundress ; long poles projected from the windows with blouses and scarlet jerseys, and striped stockings, and other gay garments—set off to advantage by the dark-green jasmine against the house—its starry blossoms almost over, but enough left to scent the evening air, as Mademoiselle Félicité sat thinking below.

She was thinking of Geneviève, her orphan niece—"I suppose all I shall ever have to care for when my mother is taken from me."

A very bitter, almost resentful look came into Félicité's face.

"If she were taller—if she had more pose in her figure, and more expression in her eyes, she would be, I fancy, very—nice-looking," it seemed as if another word had been on Félicité's lips, and that she suppressed it. "Yes, nice-looking is what she is—she is too simple-looking for beauty ; her eyes could never reveal passion or pathos ; they are so contented. My mother says I do not make a companion of the child. Bah !"—she got up from her chair, and began to pace up and down the room. "What sympathies can we have?—her life-pictures are all of the future, and mine are of the past. And is there no future for me ? Am I to see this child blooming daily into greater loveliness, exactly as I fade, attracting where I have lost all power to charm ; gaining love—a husband, perhaps a good position—by the very means and advantages I have earned for her by my incessant labours ? It is unjust—Ciel ! it is too unjust to bear !"

It seemed unjust and bitter that, for no other reason than because, at thirty-five, she was still Mademoiselle Trudin, Félicité should have to work at teaching singing and music to pupils incapable of appreciating her rare gifts, for the sake of her dead brother's child. If she had had more of the genre artiste in her, that indescribable unconventional nature which will struggle through all barriers to the good it aims at, regardless of tumbles by the way, Félicité would have gone to Paris, and would have been some one in the musical world there ; but she was well-born, spite of her poverty, and the idea of singing in public was not to be entertained. So she vegetated on at St. Roque ; not so lonely since Geneviève had been given up to her to train for her own profession, but almost as silent as when she had no companion.

She knew this, and knew, too—for she was not unfeeling—how monotonous the young girl's life must be ; left shut up in those dingy rooms to practise and study the theory of music, while her aunt trudget from

one convent to another in the vain effort of transmuting the wood she had to work on into responsive bell-metal.

"But what then?" she said to herself. "My life was a sadder one. She has no sick father to wait on, in addition to her studies; she grows quieter; but it cannot be expected that after teaching all day I can be full of entertaining conversation when at length I come in to dinner. She is well, for she is neither pale nor thin—on the contrary, although she tells me she has not left the house while I have been out, there is a glow on her cheek and a light in her eyes that puzzles me. She cannot be reading a romance; she is too sincere to deceive me."

The chimes of the old cathedral at the other end of the town went eight, and then all the little clocks took up the chorus, one after another, like a tribe of charity children singing a hymn.

Félicité rose with a brighter look on her face; she drew on a pair of old gloves, and then from the recess of a dark cupboard just outside her room door, she produced a battered green watering-pot.

Her tall slender figure looked graceful, bending over the flowers on the leads outside, as she nipped off the spent blossoms and removed the faded leaves, with a care that was almost tender in its minuteness, before she began watering. The day had been intensely hot, and the thirsty earth in the flower-pots had sucked up all the water before she had half finished; she looked down into the yard below and shouted, "Madame Leroux!" but no answer came. Madame Leroux was promenading up and down in front of the hotel, talking to the chef and the garçon de salle, who were smoking their cigarettes with her husband on the bench beside the entrance doorway.

Félicité had no resource but to go round to the fountain in the next street, or to await Madame Leroux's return, and her flowers were drooping and fading. She looked at them, and then at her empty water-can, with a very discontented face, and then she looked across at the hotel windows: the one nearest to her is being thrown open, and a handsome young man, with long fair whiskers, stepped forth on the leads and offered the loan of his pitcher. Mademoiselle bowed and thanked him. Her eyes are so lustrous as she raises them to his, that Seton begins to think she must be Geneviève's sister, instead of the dragon-like aunt he had prepared himself to conciliate.

They talked and grew more and more pleased with each other; several times Seton was on the point of mentioning Geneviève; but something—he could not have told what—checked the words as they came.

Mademoiselle said she had only just returned from Dives.

"Does Monsieur not know Dives? It is all that is most charming for the health—sea-bathing, everything. My mother inhabits Dives. I shall return to her in a day or two." And then, after a little more talk, Mademoiselle wished him "bon soir," and retreated.

Seton went back, too, into his room, and sat on the window-sill,

smoking and wondering what had become of Geneviève. Suddenly from the inner room swelled the tones of a rich full voice in Beethoven's "Adelaide." Surely it was as beautiful as Geneviève's!—it was plain she had been her aunt's pupil; he recognized the same pure style, free from all meretricious effect or ornament. There was a slight pause, and then he heard the first notes of the "Norma" duet. No, when he heard them together, there could be no mistake as to which voice he preferred; there was an angelic sweetness in the tones of his Geneviève, as he had begun to call her, that could not easily be matched. She did not sing again that evening. Mademoiselle Félicité kept possession of the piano and poured forth song after song, fairly chaining Seton to his post at the window.

He hoped that, now her aunt had returned, Geneviève would be more visible, but she never came even to the window during the next two days. Every evening he renewed his conversation with Mademoiselle Trudin, when she appeared to water her flowers; he also met her in the street and bowed to her; but still he did not speak of Geneviève. He was longing for next market-day; then he would waylay the young girl on her road to the Place. Perhaps she, too, might be going to Dives, and he could see her at her grandmother's.

Another day passed, and still no Geneviève's voice at the piano, no face at the window. Then he could restrain himself no longer, and when Félicité appeared in the evening, he asked her abruptly if he had not heard another voice mingling with hers on the first evening of their acquaintance?

He was too full of Geneviève to heed outward signs and tokens, or he might have noticed the dark shadow that fell across Félicité's face, and the sudden glitter in her eyes.

She looked unusually handsome this evening. She had dressed herself with great care; her exquisitely-fitting black silk gown revealed her well-shaped figure, and showed off, too, the delicate lace of her collar and cuffs, the former fastened up with an antique brooch. As yet no silver hairs threaded her magnificent dark braids, as they wound closely round her perfect head, and coiled about the comb that held them.

The shadow on her face deepened.

How strange that he should have noticed Geneviève's voice! She had sent her off early next morning to Dives, so that must have been his only chance—unless——.

"It was a young girl who is sometimes here." She spoke very stiffly, and Seton saw at once how unwelcome the subject was. "Had Monsieur been long at St. Roque before I had the pleasure of seeing him?"

"If I tell," thought Seton, "she looks angry enough to spirit Geneviève away. I must play this game discreetly." So he answered, "Oh! no," and went on paying her more devoted court than ever.

Poor Félicité! Men don't often know what they are doing, when they play with that tender, yet many-bladed thing, a woman's heart!

Seton only wished to fascinate Geneviève's aunt, to attach her entirely to his interests, that there might be no obstacles between him and her niece; he quite forgot the expression he had put into his smiles and looks, to a woman whose blood ran like fire through her veins, and with whom love had been a life-long craving.

At twenty, Félicité had loved, and, misled by her own vanity rather than by any intentional deception on his part, had seen the man she almost worshipped marry her intimate friend. Since then she had lived friendless, closing her heart against all confidences; even with her old mother she was the wise counsellor, the watchful nurse, never the open-hearted, dutiful daughter. But for this early blight, she would not have watched so jealously, and with such eager depreciation, the growth of Geneviève's loveliness. I believe in second-sight—in that strange foreshadowing which teaches us whence or from whom, humanly speaking, misfortune is likely to come to us—and from the time that Geneviève, a fair, small, delicate-looking child of six years old, had been transferred from Elodie's care, to live with her grandmother at Dives, Félicité had never been able to love her.

She smiled at her own face, that night, when she had lit the lamp in her room, after parting from Seton. It was no longer the proud, self-contained image she had seen reflected so often in the little mirror. The lips parted in a rosy smile—the eyes seemed almost to blush with the cheeks as they drooped beneath the well-cut eyelids. "It is come at last—at last!" she whispered softly. "The love I have so longed for—and it is such a true passion. He only knows my name; he does not even know that I am well-born, and he sees that I am poor and friendless. I told him I was going to Dives—we shall see if he follows me." And she went to bed, and dreamed of Arthur Seton.

An old woman, in a black-silk dress, over which a huge-bibbed brown holland apron was spread, sat plucking each leaf separately from the endive plants that lay in her lap, flinging them into the large shining brass pan of water beside her. She had a great black bonnet on her head to shield her from the sun—a necessary precaution at noon—for Madame Trudin's garden, though rich in vegetables, boasted of no trees but a few espaliers, and those that grew against the wall. It was, in fact, a perfect sun-trap, in which any one less accustomed to live out of doors would have been baked. But Madame Trudin, as she sat there, busily preparing her salad for breakfast, with her back towards her cottage, and her face to the sea, seemed to enjoy it quite as much as her parrot did, who was screaming "Bon jour" on his perch outside the vine-covered porch.

The click of the garden-gate sounded, and the parrot screamed "Bon jour" in yet louder tones.

"Ah ça !" The old lady shredded the few remaining leaves in double-quick time, rose up, and shook her apron. "I did not think it was so late. It must be Félicité, and I cannot even take off my apron."

She stood still, unwilling to turn her back on the expected guest, and still more unwilling to present herself before her orderly daughter in her present array; but she was not doomed to wait. Long before Félicité would have threaded the winding paths two soft arms were round Madame Trudin's neck, and Geneviève's sweet face was nestling against her plump old cheeks.

"Aha ! bonne maman, thou art taken by surprise, n'est-ce-pas ! Elodie said I was not to come over till my aunt had gone back to St. Roque ; but I dreamed I saw thee crying last night, and I woke crying, too, and then I said I will go over and see the bonne maman, even if she does not want her troublesome little girl."

The bonne maman plainly did want her. She held the fair young face between both her own hands, and kissed it on the forehead, the eyes, and on both cheeks, murmuring soft cooing words of love.

"How long hast thou been with Elodie, my jewel ?"

"Only for three days ; and after another week the aunt promised that I should make a long stay with thee. She does not want me at St. Roque, she says ; she has so much teaching now."

"Ma foi ! I thought it was just holiday time, and you would both come to the grand-mère at once ; but anyway, my child, thou art glad to be free of the hot, dusty city ?"

"Yes and no, bonne maman ; there are things I like, even in St. Roque." The lovely face was turned aside, and the large deep eyes seemed to be searching for something far away.

"Tiens ! and is it not, then, true that thou art a spoiled child, when thou canst say so to thy grand-mère ? ah bah !"—for Geneviève was kissing her again—"petite vaurienne, la grand-mère knows better than to believe all the nonsense that comes out of that baby-mouth—get along then, vite ! We have a déjeuner superbe for the aunt ; but it would be better if we had some mussels. I saw the men coming up with their baskets a quarter of an hour ago. By the time thou hast brought them thy aunt will have arrived. Va-t-en !"

Geneviève ran away ; she was hardly out of sight, flying down the shingled road that led towards the fishermen's cottages, when the grand-mère's ear heard the sound of wheels approaching.

This time she would not be caught. A shrill cry of "Marie" brought to her side a short, square woman, with a brown face, that must once have been pretty, surmounted by the high white cap of the Viroise peasantry, with its large muslin bow, just above the forehead-frill.

By signs, more than by words, Madame showed that she wished to

be disencumbered of her apron, which, being tied behind, she could not possibly get at—(no one who looked at Madame Trudin could expect her to get round herself easily); and this, by dint of tiptoeing, Marie accomplished. Then the old lady dipped her not very clean hands in the water, in which lay the salad, and wiped them on Marie's skirts; she next wiped her face with a huge red-silk pocket-handkerchief, took a pinch of snuff, settled her bonnet, and finally seated herself in her chair, ready to receive her visitor.

Yes; she was coming now, there were steps outside the gate. She got up alertly, and walked towards it, to greet Félicité.

It was indeed Mademoiselle Trudin; but she was not alone. Standing beside her—in fact, opening the gate for her to pass in—was, as the old lady afterwards told Marie in the kitchen, “le plus joli garçon du monde.”

Madame embraced her daughter, and was duly presented to Mr. Seton. Mademoiselle explained that this English gentleman was a friend of hers; she had met him quite by accident that morning in the omnibus that brought her to Dives—here Félicité blushed, and looked, her mother thought, wonderfully handsome, as she cast down her eyes—and Monsieur had said he wished to be presented to Madame Trudin.

The old lady's greeting was the rare mixture of grace and cordiality so charming and so peculiar to the old. It won Seton's heart. He decided that Madame Trudin had more of Geneviève than of Félicité in her, just while her daughter stood blessed more than ever in the conviction that he loved her only.

“And Monsieur will be good enough to eat something with us? We have breakfast exactly ready. Marie, you can serve the breakfast de suite; we shall not be seated before Mademoiselle Geneviève comes back!”

Madame screamed out this injunction so that Marie might hear in the kitchen. Félicité turned red, and then very pale. She glanced quickly at Seton, but he was so busy tormenting the parrot that she could not see his face.

Madame Trudin was already leading the way indoors. Félicité stepped up to her and took her by the arm.

“What art thou thinking of, maman? Thy largest round table will only hold three! It is insufferable to be cramped at meals! What brings Geneviève here?”

She spoke in a cold, severe voice, that Madame Trudin plainly feared. In her alarm, she had nearly said Geneviève had come over of her own accord; but motherly feeling checked the words. All at once, her cowed look departed, the smiles returned to her rosy old face, and she snapped her fingers in triumph.

“I have it, Félicité! I was thinking but now that Marie, in her sabots, would make a clumsy waitress for such a grand milord

anglais. La petite shall wait on us herself, and she can eat at the little table. Entrez ! entrez ! Monsieur, je vous en prie !”

Félicité looked gloomy. Then, remembering that she must appear at her best, she hurried up the uneven staircase into the bare, comfortless room she occupied at Dives. The walls were white-washed ; a bed, a small basin, and a looking-glass, made up the furniture, unless a crucifix beside the bed be reckoned among it. Anxious as she was to get down stairs, Félicité yet stayed to roll up her new bonnet-strings and gloves with the practised neatness of a Frenchwoman, then, with just a glance to make sure that her hair and her collar were unruffled, she loosened her lips into a smile, and descended.

Geneviève was not in the tiny salle, but three plates of soup were steaming on the snowy cloth, the middle of the table being filled by a loaf or roll certainly three feet long.

Madame had just placed her guests, and swathed her capacious chin and bosom in an enormous serviette, when Geneviève came in, bearing a plate of mussels, decorated with sprigs of purslane. She blushed as Seton rose and bowed to her ; but he did this with such ceremonious politeness, that Félicité felt tranquillized, especially when she saw him resume his seat, in obedience to her mother's injunctions.

“ Ne vous dérangez pas, Monsieur, pour la petite—it is she who will serve us, is it not, ma bonne ?” The old lady pinched the girl's blushing cheek, and held her the empty soup-plate.

For a moment Seton was vexed ; but then it was only means to an end—breakfast would soon be over—he had got the privilege he coveted, of meeting Geneviève beneath her grandmother's roof ; and if he did not have her all to himself before long, he should deserve any ill-luck that might befall him. As he thought thus, he became conscious, without looking up, that Félicité's eyes were intently fixed on him. He glanced quickly at her. What a world of passion there was in the gaze that met his for one instant, and then sank beneath it.

It struck him with a chilly fear that Aunt Félicité had mistaken his manner towards her. Then, with his usual insouciance, he argued :

“ Well, and what then ?—the only way is to keep her pacified by a little harmless attention, until I am sure of my footing with the old lady ; after that, la tante may go back to St. Roque as fast as she pleases, so long as Geneviève stays at Dives—and I will take care of that.”

He could not help stealing a glance, every now and then, at the graceful girl, as she moved about noiselessly, changing the plates as deftly as if waiting had been her true vocation. The bright sunshine streamed in through the open casements, bordered and overhung with vine-leaves, and the scent of the sweet August flowers came in with the wasps that circled and buzzed round the table. Seton thought it was like a scene in a book ; he gave himself up thoroughly to enjoyment, and even Félicité joined in the merriment of the little party.

The soup-plates were gone now, and instead appeared a cold chicken and the salad. Madame was seriously measuring and pouring in the regulated quantities of oil and vinegar, varying her employment by occasional chops at the wasps, when they came too close.

"It is waps—you call this bête in English, Monsieur?"

Seton tried to teach her the true pronunciation, but she shook her head and laughed.

"Ah! ma foi, non! Je vous en remercie. Your accent of your language is too much of trouble. One of your countrymen try to teach me long times ago how it is you call poulet. I will show you I can speak Engleesh, but it is necessary always to sneeze. Monsieur, may I have the honour to carve for you a little of"—(here she made a prodigious attempt to sneeze)—"tschicken? There!" she added, triumphantly, "is it not with justice that I call it a villain language—a language where you must go through the trouble of sneezing if you will ask even for a bit of—tschicken?"

Seton laughed heartily, and, as a crowning proof of favour, the old lady touched glasses with him. There was no wine, but the cider was potent, and she rattled on in one incessant flow of talk.

A dish of peaches from the garden, and some macaroons, ended the little feast. Geneviève had eaten, by her grandmother's orders, at the buffet. Seton could not see her face, but he remarked her perfect silence. Was she angry; could she think he was paying too much court to her aunt?—well, he would soon undeceive her. He had never seen anything so lovely as her apparition in the door-way, her little straw hat just shading her face, and the plate of mussels in her hand. He had decided on his line of conduct. Félicité would leave the room presently, and he should persuade the grandmother to let Geneviève sit to him for one of his contemplated pictures. He would not have gone on chattering so gaily to the aunt, if he had seen her niece's face. Poor little Geneviève! she could not eat any breakfast; there was a great lump in her throat which threatened to choke her if she tried to swallow. She had been so glad, so wild with happiness, to see him there seated beside her grandmother—she had been ready to wait on him, to do anything for his comfort or enjoyment; but why did he not speak to her—why had he so much pleasant talk, and such a devoted manner towards la tante, and not one word for her?

"I want to speak with you a few minutes, Geneviève," said the low musical voice of Félicité at her elbow. "Come to my room with me."

The girl felt a new strange rebellion in her till now docile heart. She was not at St. Roque. Why should la tante take so much upon herself in the grandmother's house? She followed slowly; and just as she went out of the door, she looked behind her. Arthur was waiting to meet her eyes; he knew they must seek his before she left him, and

his glance of fond, warm admiration sent her after her aunt with quicker steps and a lighter heart. "He is no hypocrite, then," she said to herself; "he likes me; I am sure he likes me, and he will talk to me by-and-by."

"Geneviève"—Mademoiselle shut her bedroom door, and as it did not boast of any handle, leaned against it to keep it close—"why are you here to-day without leave from me or your grandmother?"

"I wanted to see *bonne maman*, and I came."

Félicité wondered at the erect head and glowing cheeks and eyes. So mutinous a mood must be controlled. She looked severe.

"You know you should not make me such an answer. I am your natural guardian now that my mother is old. You are selfish, Geneviève; she does not want you here to-day, although she would not be so inhospitable as to tell you so; her house is small, and——"

"When grandmamma tells me to go, I will believe she does not want me," said Geneviève, and then she burst into tears of downright childish misery that Aunt Félicité should have taken up such a new whim as that of interfering between her and her beloved *bonne maman*.

"Leave off crying, silly child, and go home to Elodie, quietly. I do not say it is from want of love that my mother desires thy absence, but simply because we are too many for her to-day."

Geneviève's eyes dried as if by magic.

"I cannot go back to Nourenne till I have said good-bye to her."

Félicité was not a captious, ill-tempered woman: in some ways she was much-enduring; even now she wished no harm to Geneviève."

"Stay here, and I will send my mother to you, and then I expect you to go."

Félicité was perplexed. She did not want to leave Geneviève for one instant till she had seen her safely on her way to Nourenne; and yet, in the girl's new mood, which her aunt set down at once to the most insatiable vanity, she feared to bring matters to a doubtful issue by insisting on her departure without any leave-taking. While she went seeking Madame Trudin, Geneviève might purposely throw herself in the way of Seton. A girl did not fall into so strange a mood without cause. She had been spoiled by the grand-mère and by Elodie, and fancied herself entitled to admiration. Félicité's own heart told her that no one could see Seton without being fascinated by him: the kindest thing she could do was to send her niece away at once.

"Stay here till I come back again with my mother."

She pulled the door as closely as possible; and when she reached the staircase, stopped to listen. All was quiet: Geneviève did not, then, intend to follow her. The sigh of relief that escaped, showed how tense had been her previous fear.

She looked into the *salle*; it was empty; but she heard her mother's voice—talking surely to Seton. Ah! that was what she wanted;

while the old lady sent Geneviève away, she could so engross his attention that he would never miss the poor little girl, to whom his kindness might prove so hurtful.

If you had told Mademoiselle that on the adroit handling of this matter depended her own weal or woe, she would have smiled at you with that lofty air of hers, which so completely governed her mother and every one else.

But all this while Madame Trudin is talking through the kitchen window to Seton, who treads down the mignonette borders below it, that he may put in his head and admire the huge shining brass coffee-pot she shows him. He is getting out his sketch-book, vowing he will have its likeness, thereby eliciting peals of laughter from mistress and maid, for Marie stands just behind the old lady, with hands on her hips, playing chorus when needed.

There is a familiarity in this scene which offends Mademoiselle. She walks up to her mother—she has a question to ask, she says; but she takes care to smile, for Seton looks at her as she comes in. He has turned away now that she bends down to speak to the old lady; but Félicité is not troubled, he has left his sketch-book on the window-sill, and she shall join him in the garden directly.

He wanders round the house, looking in at all the windows to find Geneviève. She is alone, perhaps; he backs, and gazes at the upper story. Yes, there she is, looking out over the distant country, with a sad, heart-wrung expression on her lovely face.

"Come out here into the passage," said Félicité to Madame Trudin. "I do not like Monsieur Seton to see thee in the kitchen. English-women do not attend to the details of their ménage as we do; he may consider thy presence there ill-bred." Then, as briefly as possible, she told her mother to dismiss Geneviève.

"But, Félicité, what harm does the child do here?"

"My mother, have I ever led thee astray by my advice? If thou dost not send the poor child away at once, thou wilt be her worst enemy."

"Thou art laughing at me, my daughter, as the men and women talk in the feuilleton of *Le Petit Journal*."

Félicité paused just an instant and listened. Geneviève had not unclosed her door yet. Time was important; but it was still more important that Madame Trudin should see really how matters stood.

"Come in here a moment, ma mère." She led the way to the salle, at the further end of the passage, away from the kitchen. Mademoiselle Trudin closed the casements; Seton might be close by.

Then she hinted—and her ambiguity was sadly puzzling at first to the downright comprehension of the bonne maman—that Mr. Seton had intentions in her favour; and that as it was plain that Geneviève was beginning to think a good deal of herself, Madame Trudin

was bound, both by motherly duty and feeling, to keep the child out of his society. It has been said that the grandmother was downright—she made a hole in her manners now by her want of quick perception.

"Ah, ma pauvre Félicité! and you think that if he looks at Spring he will not fancy full-blown Summer—courage, my child, thou art wondrously handsome still, and if he loves thee and has chosen thee, he will not be won away even by my sunbeam of a Geneviève."

"Thou art completely mistaken"—the old lady was alarmed at the stern dignity that stiffened every line of the proud face: "There is neither doubt nor fear in my mind about Mr. Seton; it is of Geneviève I speak—I fear for her. Mother, remember how I suffered once; wilt thou not spare this child?"

The words came with such strange earnestness that the mother, all unused to confidence of any kind from her wise, queen-like daughter, submitted at once.

"Bien, bien, my Félicité, thou art always thinking for every one. Go out into the garden to Monsieur; he has been left too long to amuse himself. I will send my poor little darling away, and if thou keepest the side of the garden farthest from the gate, no one need be any the wiser when she goes."

Félicité's lip curled at the last word. Was her mother still afraid that Geneviève could stand in her aunt's way?—and yet why did Félicité's own heart beat with such full painful throbs; could all this eager, pent-up feeling be only consideration for Geneviève?

Mr. Seton was not in the garden—at least, she could not find him there. While she stood perplexed, Mdme. Trudin's voice called from daughter's window:

"Ah ça, Félicité! Geneviève is gone—poor, dear little angel! without so much as saying 'Good-bye.'"

The dark shadow was on Mademoiselle's handsome face. She came into the house and called to Marie—

"Marie, did you see Mademoiselle Geneviève go away? Had she her hat on?"

"Mais, oui!" The privileged old servant came out, wiping her hands on her blue stuff apron. "Did you not hear Elodie just when you took Madame away into the salle? Well, she came calling Mademoiselle to see the fine haul of crabs they had brought in down below. I heard her tell Mademoiselle Geneviève she had come to fetch her home, and the Monsieur said he should like to see the crabs too, and they were all off to the shore together, not two minutes ago."

"Peste!" muttered so deeply between Félicité's teeth that no one could have heard it; but the old servant saw the tempest in her face. "They are together, after all!"

KATHARINE S. MACQUOID.

(Concluded in our next.)

QUIET ATTENTIONS.

BY HESBA STRETTON.

"WITH women the great business of life is love," says Hazlitt ;
 "and they generally make a mistake in it." I wish to know
 why this latter clause is true.

In the first place, I believe there is at bottom a very subtle, but unacknowledged antagonism between man and woman, which has been scotched somewhat by the progress of civilization and chivalry, but which is too deeply rooted not to crop up here and there in all sorts of unexpected forms. There is very little true trust and tenderness existing between them ; but there is an almost universal disbelief in the strength and endurance of each other's emotions, whenever those emotions trench upon the sphere of affection. Read any man's writings, from Chaucer or Shakespeare downwards, and you find running through them a scoff and sneer, scarcely conscious, and therefore the more natural, against the idea of real constancy and love in woman. Listen to any woman's talk, and sooner or later she will let slip the melancholy sentiment of the Psalmist, "All men are liars," or at least that milder rendering of the same passage, "All men fail me." There is as much antagonism implied between "male and female" as between "Jew and Greek ; bond and free."

There are two mistakes which women are apt to make in the outset of their business, which tend to a very pitiable bankruptcy. In a few cases she may remain perfectly unconscious of the advances of any lover until, after the lapse of months or even years, she is suddenly surprised and confounded by an utterly unexpected offer. Charlotte Brontë, who, as one would suppose, was all aflame with the passion which pervades her writings, was loved for years without suspecting it, until "like lightning," she says, "it flashed upon me." But this mistake is at once less common and less perilous than its opposite. What can surpass the absurdity, the chagrin, the mortification, the heart-sickness and heart-soreness of a woman who has buoyed herself upon the hope that advances are being made to her, when in truth the supposed suitor has no serious intentions at all ?

What are advances, and when are men making them ? "A course of small, quiet attentions," says Sterne, "not so pointed as to alarm, nor so vague as to be misunderstood, with now and then a look of kindness, and little or nothing said upon it." That is a man's answer to my question ; the simplest and most straightforward I can find, after a long and careful research. And what a depth of cunning and discretion there is

in it! Not too pointed, that the man's honour may not be bound by them; and not too vague to leave the woman fancy-free. "A look of kindness now and then, and little or nothing said upon it," is delicious, inimitable. It gives him so much vantage, and allows her so full a scope for the active play of the imagination. "Small, quiet attentions!" How small may they be, and how quiet? In what way are we to make sure that these delicate attentions are being paid to us?

Would Sterne, or will men in general, admit that squeezing the hand is one of these small, quiet attentions which have great meaning in them? There is historical and royal evidence in affirmation of it, Dartmouth's old scandal of Edward Montagu losing his post of Chamberlain to Charles the Second's Catherine: "Her Majesty asked the King (having never had an admirer before nor after), what people meant by squeezing the hand? The King (no incompetent authority) told her 'love.' 'Then,' said she, 'Mr. Montagu loves me mightily.' Upon which he was turned out." Yet what woman would dare risk her happiness, or her success in business, upon so trivial an advance as this? Even that more significant attention of keeping the hand in a warm, pleasant, lingering custody, which is quiet and pointed enough, and so paid as to make it difficult to notice favourably, save by a drooping of the eyelids and a more conscious flushing of the cheeks; even this, one knows, is no more to be relied upon than is a reed to be leant upon in a tempest.

What about correspondence? It is so pleasant to write to a woman; such an escape-valve for the compressed sentiment, which all a man's dealings with the world cannot entirely consume, that one ought not to clog this delicate interchange of thought and feeling with the responsibility of being an advance. It is no more than an element of Platonic friendship. The German girl, Meta Klopstock, describes the progress of her Platonic correspondence with the poet in one of her charming letters written in English to Richardson. "It was a strong hour," she writes; "the hour of Klopstock's departure. He wrote soon after; and from that time our correspondence began to be a very diligent one. I sincerely believed my love to be friendship. I spoke with my friends of nothing but Klopstock, and showed his letters. They raillied me, and said I was in love. I raillied them again, and said they must have a very friendshipless heart, if they had no idea of friendship to a man as well as to a woman. My friends found as much love in Klopstock's letters as in me. I perceived it likewise, but I would not believe it. At the last Klopstock said plainly that he loved, and I startled, as for a wrong thing. I answered that it was no love, but friendship; we had not seen one another enough for love, as if love must have more time than friendship!" Richardson himself declares, in his oracular manner, "Platonic love is Platonic nonsense; 'tis the fly buzzing about the blaze till its wings are scorched. Age, old age, and nothing else, must establish the barriers of Platonic love." Yet I wonder how many letters to-

night's post will scatter up and down through the country which shall be just as vague and as pointed as Sterne would have them to be?

"No kissing!" said Göthe's first love, the little milliner, Gretchen; "no kissing! that is so vulgar; but let us love, if we can!" No doubt the girl, two years the senior, was laughing at the impassioned boy, yet there was a rare refinement in her distaste. Wieland, the German novelist, must have been a sublime lover. He was perfectly convinced that love is born with the first sigh, and expires in a certain degree with the first kiss. Zimmerman asked the young lady to whom he was attached, when it was that Wieland saluted her for the first time? "Wieland," replied the amiable girl, "did not kiss my *hand* for the first four years of our acquaintance!" Of the same transcendental order must have been that Puritan divine who, after a betrothal of seven years, asked a blessing and returned thanks over the first kiss, and was married shortly afterwards, it is added. These were betrothed kisses, it is true; but are there no experimental ones? Down in innocent places in the country, where it is rather rural than vulgar? The excitement of being kissed unexpectedly is great and rare, for no man can take a girl by surprise twice, the memory of a first kiss lingering in her mind for ever afterwards. There is, let it be confessed frankly, a certain kind of triumphant disquietude in having been kissed, a grazing of the skin of the conscience, and a tiny sting left in it, which gives zest to the stolen caress; but still we say, with Gretchen, "No kissing; that is so vulgar!"

Teaching; the most subtle of all quiet attentions. Sitting side by side, with heads almost touching one another, bent above the same page; leaves turned over by fingers that cannot help but meet sometimes; words in a foreign language shyly echoed by the pupil, who only half knows their meaning; wilful mistakes made to lure the tutor into chidings, which need a hundred flatteries to unsay them; grave digressions to display the learning of the one and the sweet reverence of the other. "Nothing can conduce to a more beautiful union," says Göthe. But after all, does it often conduce to union? There is one question which the teacher alone can ask; the scholar, like a ghost, can only speak when the spell of silence is broken, and nine times out of ten he goes away, leaving that one question unasked.

A maiden friend of mine, who has been wooed eleven times, and knows a good deal about it, assures me that the only attentions to be taken notice of, and relied upon, are those that touch the pocket. "When your Platonic friend," she says, "begins to offer gifts, costly according to his means, depend upon it the affair has become a business with him, as well as with you." The American missionary, Judson, possessed a valuable watch, which he bestowed in succession before marriage upon each of his three wives; when he offered it to the third object of his affections, he stated that it had the desirable property of

always returning to him, bringing the beloved wearer with it. Be sure the wise and prudent man would never have parted with his watch, unless he had been firmly persuaded that he was making a good investment, safe to bring him in large and clear returns. When a costly offering is laid upon the shrine, the offerer means worship.

Some men much need Sydney Smith's reminder of the Deluge, "when a great alteration was made in the longevity of mankind. He should gaze at Noah, and be brief!" Of all women she is most to be pitied who has a slow-paced suitor; he is worse than a retrograding one. How admirable, how prompt, how perfectly satisfactory was the conduct of another legendary Puritan, who rode up to the door of the house where dwelt the girl of his choice, and having desired her to be called out to him, said, without circumlocution, "Rachel, the Lord hath sent me to marry thee!" when the girl answered, with equal promptitude and devoutness, "The Lord's will be done!"

Once I had the charge of a four-year old laddie, to whom I chattered, as women who love children are wont to do, of all things that came into my own mind, grave or gay, fun or earnest, fairy tales or Bible histories. One afternoon the fancy seized me to teach him the following stanzas, which he learned by heart, with that profound gravity, almost amounting to gloom, so often shown by children :—

"'Tis good to be merry and wise;
'Tis good to be honest and true;
'Tis good to be off with the old love
Before you are on with the new."

"Oh, auntie!" cried the boy, when he had mastered it, "what a pretty verse! I should so like to say it with my prayers!" I was too orthodox then to consent to that; but very often since I have thought I might have done worse than teach him to blend ideas of honesty and truth in love with the habit of worship. The knight of olden times vowed fidelity to God and his lady. Perfect truth here would be perfect wisdom. Love only becomes a business to women after they have made some bitter discoveries; until then it is little less than the religion of life to them. Göthe, that prince of philanderers, has given us a glimpse of the retribution that overtook him. "I had wounded," he said, "the most beautiful heart to its very depths, and the period of a gloomy repentance, with the absence of a refreshing love to which I had grown accustomed, was most agonizing—nay, unsupportable." I will conclude with some wise counsel from the same Sterne who gives so crafty a definition of "small, quiet attentions:"—"Be open, be honest; give yourself for what you are; conceal nothing, varnish nothing; and if those weapons will not do, better not conquer at all, than conquer for a day; when the dream is over, and we awake in the morning, it will ever be the same story: And it came to pass, behold it was Leah!"

THE GRAY MONK.

ONE afternoon, late in September, many years ago, I found myself wandering over one of the mountains of the Bernese Oberland, without any conception as to the road I should take to reach my hotel in the valley beneath. It was a strange predicament to be in. I was entirely alone, unaccompanied even by a dog; but I was not dismayed, although it was beginning to grow dusk. I wandered on, never meeting with any human being. It gradually became darker, and the huge forms of the snow mountains looked larger and more sharply defined against the gray evening sky. The giant——Horn was at my back, with its glaciers, looking cold and grim, and very indistinct, while the top of the mountain was lost in the rapidly increasing volumes of mist and vapour.

I was descending a water-course supposed to be dry; but it was not really so, the mountain torrents having already begun to swell; in some places it was impassable. Evidently I had lost the path. I turned and looked around me in some bewilderment. The prospect was not exhilarating. To descend into the valley seemed a perilous venture, if not an impossible feat, at that late hour; and to spend the night in this Alpine solitude sounded better in perspective than it was in reality.

Suddenly, some feet above me, I discovered through the gloom a glimmering light, then another, and a third appeared. These lights seemed to me to proceed from some large building, of which I could not perceive the faintest outline. I lost no more time in mere surmises, but sprang up towards the friendly beacons. They seemed to recede as I advanced; the ascent became more toilsome, rugged, and steep, the path winding painfully, as is the way of these acclivities in Switzerland. At length I reached, after another hard climb, an old postern-door, almost choked-up with weeds and rubbish. Here I paused again, to discover what I could in the dim light. It appeared to be the back-entrance to some large building. I struck at the door loudly with my staff, but met with no other response than the deep baying of a St. Bernard dog. This proved to me that I had found some habitation, and I resolved to try and discover its main entrance. Accordingly, I skirted a low deep wall sunk in a fosse, and to my great joy, upon turning the corner, I came in front of the building. It was evidently a monastery, surrounded by its wall and fosse, long, low, irregularly shaped, the great proportion of it hidden in trees.

I summoned up courage to mount a few moss-eaten stone steps,

and gave the large bell as strong a pull as I could. It resounded with a solemn peal, startling the air with its vibrations. I had to wait some little time before I heard the heavy door unbarred. It gave way with a clang, and there appeared the tall figure of a monk, habited in a gray dress, with a large white cross upon his breast. I told him my tale in French. He understood me, though he replied in Italian, and his words were those of welcome. He stated that, whoever I might be, I could receive shelter for one night at the monastery of the "Gray Monks:" no weary traveller was ever turned away from these doors.

I thanked him in the best Italian I could muster, and gratefully followed the direction of his beckoning finger, for I was chilled to the very bones, and was, moreover, both hungry and thirsty. My conductor led me through the porch into a long narrow corridor, which evidently ran the whole length of the building, as I could not see the other end of it. By the dismal light of a lamp, hung from the ceiling by a chain, I discovered that several doors were ranged on either side this passage, and on our way we passed openings revealing flights of stone stairs.

However, I had not time for any extended or accurate observations, and we passed these, till my ghostly conductor ushered me into a good sized plainly-furnished apartment, made cheerful by a large wood fire, that blazed, crackled, and sparkled, in the capacious chimney. The furniture consisted of deal settles, and a long table of the same material, stretching almost the whole length of the room. Round this table were seated about seven or eight monks, habited in gray, the white cross standing out conspicuously upon the breast of each. All rose upon my entrance, and I was welcomed by the prior, with a grave and dignified courtesy almost kingly in its bearing. He invited me to warm myself at the fire, while my supper was preparing, in so kind and friendly a manner, that I felt at once thoroughly at ease. We soon sat down to supper: a plentiful meal, consisting of but two dishes: boiled maccaroni and stewed chamois, or goat's flesh, washed down by a flask of pure chablis; a wine evidently brought out for my special use, as none of the monks partook of it. The brethren ate but very sparingly, neither did they ever do otherwise, I judged, by their lean and meagre countenances. The Prior was the only one who entered into conversation with me. I found him a man of remarkable powers of mind, and possessing considerable erudition; indeed, he seemed to me to be well acquainted with almost every branch of ancient and modern learning.

I find it difficult to describe the outward physique of Father Paul, for such was the Prior's cognomen, though it made the most profound impression upon me. Even at this distance of time, I can distinctly recall every lineament of that noble countenance, stamped with dignity and goodness in every line. The expression of the face was in general

melancholy, even sad ; but at times a smile of rare beauty, almost feminine in its tenderness, illumined his pale features, like a ray of sunshine. His eyes, of a deep, dark blue, lighted up when interested in any subject, with an almost unearthly radiance. The contour of the nose, chin, and mouth was perfect ; while the broad and massive brow displayed the splendour of his intellect, and his rare gifts. When my eyes met his serious yet kindly glance, I felt at once that I could trust him ; and, upon the other hand, he seemed to have some secret, yet powerful, attraction towards me. Upon a future day, I learned the reason of this.

After a few hours spent in conversation, Father Paul himself conducted me to my dormitory.

Before I retired I had felt a strange shiver run through my frame, and began to fear that my exposure to the chill night air, even though for a comparatively short time, had given me a severe cold. My fears were not groundless. I passed a restless night, slept fitfully, and my dreams were a weird, fantastic jumble of my evening's adventure. I was haunted by the countenance of Father Paul, whose benign and striking aspect had so impressed me. I woke quite early in the morning, ere day dawn, and heard the monks performing their orisons in solemn and sepulchral tones, which rose above the roar of the wind ; it had been an awful night, and the storm had not entirely ceased.

A few days before, when upon one of my mountaineering expeditions, I had slipped down and bruised my shoulder. The injured part now gave me such pain that I was quite unable to rise from my bed. Thus it seemed I must remain at the monastery for at least some days. I felt considerable uneasiness. How would the brethren like such an imposition upon their hospitality ? These thoughts wearied me, but they were soon all dispelled, when Father Paul entered my apartment, surprised at my non-appearance to partake of the breakfast he had himself provided for me. He quickly saw the state of the case, and proved himself a physician as well as a learned monk ; prescribed for me, enjoined rest and quiet, applied a soothing lotion to my sprained shoulder, and cheered my somewhat drooping spirits, by telling me I was not the first wayfarer who had been nursed and tended by the Gray Monks.

Considerably reassured by his kindness, my pain alleviated by his remedies, I soon sank into a refreshing sleep. When I woke, the autumn sun was high in the heavens. By the end of a week I began slowly to recover, but was told by Father Paul I must not think of leaving until my health was quite re-established.

Upon the morning of the eighth day, though I was still weak, I requested Father Paul to fulfil his promise to show me over the monastery. He smiled gravely, and replied, " Since it is your wish, my son, I will do so. I will first conduct you to the library, where I spend

many hours every day. It contains many things of interest. You will see that in this monastery we have not been behind-hand in learning or cultivation."

I found the library a large and well-furnished chamber ; in this respect a striking contrast to the rest of the rooms in the monastery. The shelves were well stored with books upon almost every subject, and contained a collection of the rarest and costliest manuscripts in several ancient languages. Splendidly emblazoned and illuminated missals, gorgeously bound, and clasped volumes, met my delighted gaze. The good Father enjoyed my surprise and rapture over these rare works of art, and the time passed delightfully away. At length I became wearied, and Father Paul, leading me to the deep embrasure of the windows, quietly seated me, and told me to look at the fair prospect without. I did so, and involuntarily started back. I had not before seen how strikingly the monastery was situated. It was built upon the verge of a precipice. From this window I gazed into a descent of several hundred feet. Below, almost invisible, like a thread of liquid silver, rolled what was in reality an impetuous mountain torrent, which when swollen by the winter rains, rushed at headlong speed down the valley, carrying all before it. Beyond, rose the giant Alpine peaks, upon this clear day, dazzling and bright with the sun's rays reflected upon their glaciers and snow-fields. I gazed long in deep admiration, searching into the depths of the valley until my head became dizzy, and I felt mortified that my entire recovery was so long delayed.

The good Father drew down the blind, to hide the bright glare of the noontide sun ; and seating himself beside me, engaged me in conversation, and drew out of me the few particulars of my short life. He sighed deeply two or three times at its conclusion, and a spasm of pain contracted his features, while he gazed earnestly into my face, exclaiming, "You are so like—so like." I was much surprised ; and Father Paul, making an effort to recover himself, said sadly, "I owe you an explanation, my son, of my strange remark. You shall have it ; but it must be a brief one, for it is a subject upon which I cannot trust myself to speak. You are the living image of my dear young brother, long since dead ! He was the only tie that bound me to the world, and when I lost him, I took upon me the vows of a monk. Never since then have I left these walls. Understand, now, the secret of my sudden love for you. My life will die out when you leave this monastery ; yet, go you must, as soon as you are able ; for it is against our rules to detain any one here, unless he has need of our services."

We left the library, and the next morning Father Paul conducted me over the rest of the monastery. I could not fail to be struck with the air of dilapidation and decay it presented.

"You may well wonder, my son, at what you see," he remarked, noticing my surprise. "Your illness has prevented you from hitherto

observing what strikes a stranger at once upon entering the monastery of the Gray Monks. It is cursed of Heaven," he continued solemnly, "for a deed of treachery and blood, perpetrated by one of the brethren, many, many years ago. Since then nothing has prospered here. Repairs have been commenced, but have always been stopped from some cause or other, and now they are never attempted. The building must perish, if such is the will of Heaven. In the meantime I will do what I can to preserve the library and the collection of rare manuscripts intact. No! never again shall this monastery flourish! It is usually only those who have committed great crimes who resort hither to a life of austerity to expiate them. But do not look upon me as one of their number, for though in the sight of Heaven I am as foul a sinner as any, yet have I been preserved from open, heinous transgression. It is my vocation here to minister to those who have. Hence our strict rules, our solitary vigils."

I saw the subject was a painful one, and did not choose to pursue it further. There was some mystery I longed to fathom, but the time did not seem to have arrived; perhaps before I left I might hear the whole story. I resolved upon a harmless subterfuge—to remain a day or two longer, and ungratefully declined getting well as soon as I might otherwise have done, had I been in a hurry to leave my mountain retreat.

The monastery consisted of but two stories, as is the case generally with buildings erected upon great heights. After exploring the principal part, we descended into the main corridor. Looking behind me, I recognized the door which led to the refectory, and still further off another flight of stairs, which appeared to lead into the upper story of the building. I had not yet traced the whole of this passage. My guide having left me at the library-door, to follow my own devices until the dinner-hour, I wandered along, determined to see what was at the extreme end of it. After winding about for some distance, I suddenly came to its termination; here it branched out, and became much broader. Upon my left hand was a door, which opened into the grounds of the monastery; to my right another flight of stairs, leading to a gallery, which crossed the whole width of the passage. At either end of this gallery was a door, the one on the right hand, the other on the left. I now heard a soft footfall advancing behind, and looking round, a little startled, saw the Prior approaching. He said, with some embarrassment, which I could not help observing: "I heard the direction you took, and remembered that I had not showed you the door which leads you to what used to be the gardens. They are now hardly worthy of that name; but you may like to explore them." I also felt confused, thinking he might consider me inquisitive, and said, apologetically:

"Pardon my curiosity, Father, it seems uncalled for; but I was not, I frankly confess, at this moment thinking of the gardens. I do feel interested about yonder gallery; you did not show it to me. I am fond

of exploring." He turned a shade paler, but replied, in a tone of assumed cheerfulness :

"Ah! well—that can be left for to-day. Come back with me to the library. I have a rare Coptic manuscript to show you." So he allured me away. I forgot everything else for a time when conversing with him, and the mysterious gallery passed from my recollection. But in the night, as I lay awake, listening to the dismal moaning of the wind, to the branches of the trees swaying backwards and forwards, and striking against my casement, I again thought of it, and was resolved to make one more effort to visit it before my departure.

The morning dawned, wet and gloomy. "Departure was not to be thought of," the Prior said ; and even Fra Giralamo, the brother who had opened to me the door of this hospitable abode, echoed, by a faint smile, the invitation to remain with them two more days.

In the evening the Prior informed me that the next day would be a strict fast. Every brother, including himself, would pass it upon his bare knees, each in his own cell. At first I made up my mind to quit the monastery then, as the Prior would not be able to see me the whole day ; but upon second thought decided to wait, in hopes of an opportunity for exploring the gallery. The Prior had not refused to allow me to visit it, though he had not offered to show it to me himself, and I was too fearful of being denied to ask him again upon the point.

How still and deserted the building appeared to me the next morning, as my solitary footsteps echoed along the stone corridors ! But the brethren had not forgotten my breakfast, though each had retired to the solitude of his own cell. The rain was still descending in torrents, and every mountain was blotted out in a dense mist. However, after getting thoroughly warm, and eating a good breakfast, I resolved to lose no more time in exploring the mysterious gallery. Accordingly I rose, and proceeded to the end of the corridor. All still and deserted, it seemed like a house of the dead, the only sounds being the pattering of the rain and the lugubrious wailing of the wind, which sounded like some unearthly requiem.

I had no sooner cast my eyes up to the gallery, than I saw a tall thin figure, habited in the dress of the Gray Monks, the large white cross standing out very distinctly. He held up a small book before his face, which he appeared to be reading. There was no solemn tramp of his "sandalled shoon" upon the floor, as he so regularly paced it up and down ; a faint rustle of the gray garment was all the sound I heard. He was taller and more attenuated than any of the brethren, and his nose and chin were sharply defined. I gazed, and discovered that I had never yet seen his face. Still I was not much disturbed ; perhaps he was some lay-brother, in punishment, or performing some vow, and I must not intrude upon him. I felt disappointed. I was not, it seemed, destined to visit the mysterious gallery.

I was just turning to go away, and had cast my eyes once more where the monk was walking, when lo! he had vanished. Whither could he have gone? I could distinctly see the doors on each side of the gallery, which were fast closed, and I felt sure he had not descended the flight of stairs, and passed by me. I rubbed my eyes to assure myself I had not been dreaming, and looked up again. Neither monk, nor shadow of one! I was fairly baffled, and though a strangely cold sensation came over me, I cleared the small flight of stairs almost at one bound, and found myself standing in the gallery. At the same moment, I became conscious of some presence near me—not visible, it is true—but I heard the rustle of a garment. I felt decidedly uncomfortable. Yet where was the monk? Had I really seen him? Could I credit the evidence of my own senses? It seemed as if they were deceiving me.

I began to think the whole a delusion. My nerves were weak, perhaps, after my illness, but this seemed folly in one who had never before known what nerves meant; so I prepared to commence my tour of inspection. I tried to open one of the doors—that on my right, as I stood with my back to the staircase. There was a rusty key in the lock; it turned easily, and I entered. Imagine my disappointment at finding a plain, bare, whitewashed apartment, destitute of furniture. I cast a hasty glance round to assure myself that no monk was there, and closing the door with an exclamation of disgust, proceeded to open the other. This was not so easy. For a time it resisted my most strenuous efforts. At length, with a dull grating sound, the key turned round in the lock, and I entered the room. It exactly resembled the one I had just quitted, only that there was a low door just opposite me, evidently leading to other apartments. At this instant, I became conscious of the same rustling sound I had heard in the gallery, and the shadow of a gray monk flitted by me on the wall. Advancing to the low door of which I have spoken, I found it ajar, and I did not perceive that it opened only from the outside, with a spring-lock. It shut behind me with a heavy clang, which must have resounded through the monastery, for it was loud enough to waken the “Seven Sleepers.” At the same time, a gust of wind drove into my face, for all the loopholes, which serving for windows in the corridor, were exposed to the open heavens. I walked down the long narrow passage at a slow pace, my progress being impeded by blocks of stone and rubbish. At last I came to a door to which I administered a vigorous push, and it burst open, admitting me into a small turret chamber, certainly not more than twelve feet round. The light, as in the passage, was admitted through narrow slits, many feet above the ground-floor, so that it was but owl-light at the best. The furniture of the room consisted of an old worm-eaten bedstead, a small wooden table, and a rude settle, upon which lay a pewter plate. Evidently, many years ago, this extraordinary apartment

had been used as a prison, perhaps for a Vaudois heretic, and remained, I supposed, as it had been left by the last tenant.

Having examined this weird chamber, I prepared to return, a little disappointed at the result of my researches, but congratulating myself upon the contrast the more cheerful refectory would present to the gloomy cell. But when I came to the door at the end of the long passage, I could not unfasten it! As I have stated, it had closed heavily behind me, and the spring-lock had caught. I was immured in this prison, as much confined and unable to stir as my imaginary Waldensee! Release till the evening was improbable in the highest degree. The brethren were in their separate cells, so would not miss me till a late hour, even if then, and my good friend, the Prior, might not appear at all, after such a day of penance and mortification. My dismay became so great at the prospect of a night spent in this dismal place, that I thumped with both my fists upon the hard oaken door, barred with clamps of iron; it was quite impervious to my blows, and I only succeeded in bruising my hands. At length, worn out with my futile efforts, I seated myself upon the stone steps, and fell into an unpleasant train of thought. Presently I rose, and slowly retraced my steps to the turret-chamber, for it was less cold there.

All this time, strange to say, I did not think again of the mysterious monk; but as the hours slowly wore away; as it became dusk, and I grew faint from want of food, my brain became susceptible of all sorts of illusions and phantasms. I began to enter into the feeling of the prisoner Bonivard, as he paced the length of his chain, round the stone pillar in the rock-hewn dungeons of Chillon. I dozed for a short time from sheer weariness and inanition, and passed through many a troubled dream, until I awoke with a start, and in the dusk saw the tall figure of the gray monk standing in the doorway. He stretched forth a long thin finger in the direction where I lay upon the floor of the cell, and it seemed to me that he gave a jeering laugh, though I only saw his features move. It was too much for my overstrained nerves. I gave, I suppose, a piercing cry, and then relapsed into unconsciousness. I remembered nothing more until I was aroused by a human hand clasping my own, and human tears falling upon my cheek. At the same time I heard tones exclaiming, "Oh! my son! my son! must you also fall a victim in this accursed spot? Does the blood of the murdered one still cry out for vengeance? Oh! any vengeance but this! Spare yet the living image of my beloved one!"

At these violent, yet passionate words, I became thoroughly aroused, and looking up, found I was supported in the arms of the Prior, and that my head was resting on his shoulder. His eyes were full of tears as he met my glance, but he seemed ashamed of his emotion, and said in calmer tones: "My instinct guided me hither; I missed you when I came into the refectory to wish you good-night. I repaired to

your dormitory, as I knew you were to depart on the morrow. I wished to say a few parting words to one I may never meet again in this world. You were not there : a suspicion flashed into my mind—whether an inspiration or not, I cannot tell—that you were in these chambers. I knew you to be enterprising, courageous, and a little curious,”—here he smiled. “Had you known all about these apartments, you would have required more courage still. But now you must have some refreshment.” So saying, he arose, and led me gently from the cell. I was glad enough to leave it, and enjoy a good meal in the more cheerful refectory. Before I left, the next day, I gleaned the following narrative from Father Paul, whose tender care of me had been unremitting during my whole sojourn in the monastery, and had been redoubled, if that were possible, since my unlucky escapade in the turret-chamber.

About two hundred years ago, the Monastery of the Gray Monks was a rich and flourishing demesne. Many of the lands lying in the valley below belonged to them. All the building, now so rapidly hastening to decay, was then in perfect repair. The monastery was inhabited by forty or fifty monks. The rules of their order were strict, but upon the whole, the brethren contrived to live a comfortable, not to say a jolly life.

These were stormy times in Europe, and the Vaudois valleys were overrun by the soldiers of the Pope, engaged in their cruel work of pillaging, murdering, and exterminating the defenceless inhabitants, who had dared to adopt what were then considered principles of the most damnable heresy. Rumours of what was being done in the Piedmontese valleys travelled but slowly to other parts of Switzerland, and to the almost inaccessible fastnesses of the Bernese Oberland. At length the news came, and different views were expressed by the brethren about these deeds of violence and blood. About this time a poor wandering traveller was found nearly frozen to death outside the walls of the monastery. It was the custom then, as now, for the monks to extend a helping hand to wayfarers of this kind. The man was brought inside these walls, from which he was destined never again to depart alive. Every restorative was applied to him ; he was kindly and carefully tended, till health and strength returned. No one knew who he was ; he avoided carefully giving any information about himself, but he appeared very unwilling to leave such comfortable quarters. At length one of the monks, Brother Ambrose, discovered, from a few words dropped inadvertently, that the stranger was a Vaudois pastor, who had thus far evaded the fury of his persecutors, and had nearly perished upon this Alpine height. Brother Ambrose concealed the triumphant rage with which this discovery filled him, and upon the poor man (horror-stricken at the secret being known) throwing himself upon his mercy, the persecuted wretch promised not to betray him. Brother Ambrose was a furious

bigot. Here was an opportunity of finishing the career, and that speedily of this poor hunted one. He had always longed to be engaged in the glorious work of despatching heretics.

Upon extorting all he could out of the poor pastor by cajolery and flattery, he went and repeated all to the pious Father Jerome.

Fortunately for the Vaudois, Father Jerome was a merciful man, and though annoyed at harbouring a heretic, he began to take an interest in the poor wayfarer. He cast about in his mind how to reconcile his duty to his Church, and his desire to be compassionate to the guest whom he had protected. He desired to prevent the Vaudois going at large, which was to ensure his destruction, while he punished his heresy in some way. After revolving the subject a great deal in his mind, he hit upon a plan, which was forthwith put into execution, with the consent of all the monks in full conclave, with, indeed, the feigned consent of Brother Ambrose. The Vaudois was incarcerated in the turret-chamber of the north tower, and forbidden to leave it upon any pretext whatever. The spring-door would effectually preclude his escape, even if he felt inclined to make the attempt; but he was not very likely to be anxious to leave so safe and quiet a retreat. In that cell some weeks glided by. The monks took it by turns to attend upon him; all were mercifully inclined towards him, excepting Brother Ambrose. He was the Judas of the band, and this mild treatment of the Vaudois pastor filled him with rage and bitter spite. Having no means of communicating with the persecutors of the Waldenses, he resolved to take the matter into his own hands, and to wreak his vengeance upon his unoffending victim. One day, when it was his turn to attend upon the prisoner, he murdered him in his cell, then dragged the body down the long passage, which has been described, through the first chamber, along the gallery into the garden, buried it in a deep grave at the bottom of the fosse, then dry as it is now, and where the remains were discovered long years afterwards. No one suspected him of such murderous intent; the deed was done at night, cleverly planned, and skilfully executed. He returned to the empty cell, removed all traces of his guilt, excepting a few spots of blood which still remain. He then gave out that the Vaudois had escaped, the spring-door having inadvertently been left open. The story was too unlikely to be believed; but though Brother Ambrose was suspected of foul play, his guilt could not be proved. Deeds of violence were more common in those days than now, and no strict search or inquiry was made into the matter.

At length the remorse of the wretched man became so deep that he told the whole story to his father-confessor, imploring absolution for his crime, and further requesting him to divulge the hateful secret to the Prior. This was done, and Brother Ambrose was sentenced to be confined in the same cell in which he had murdered the Vaudois. A terrible punishment surely, where the horrible memento of his crime

would for ever rise up before him. He soon died, wasting away with anguish and remorse. That part of the monastery has ever since been haunted by his uneasy spirit ; but it only comes about the time of year the murder was committed, namely, the 30th of October. Brother Ambrose regularly appears then, sometimes a day or two before and after that date, and until the monastery crumbles into dust the spirit of the perjured traitor will be the curse of its inmates.

Such was the substance of the story I heard from the lips of Father Paul. I again implored him to leave the hateful building with me, but he steadily refused. "Nay, my son," he said ; "here must I end my days. I must bear my portion of the curse. I must still minister to sin-stricken souls. It is for the glory of God ! Perhaps some day He may remove the curse. As for you, my dear son," tenderly laying his hand upon my head, "return to the world I have left ; seek not monastic seclusion, it is not your vocation. May Heaven's choicest blessings attend you every step of the way ! And then some day," raising his eyes devoutly to heaven, while an expression of rapture lighted up his pale and wasted features to more than earthly beauty, "yes ! one day we shall meet again, in the presence of the Great Father Himself, the miseries of this life over for ever and for ever."

We then parted, each with an indescribable emotion of pain—how bitter upon the part of the Prior, was known only to himself. As for me, though young and buoyant, "I sorrowed to think I should see his face no more."

My memory pictures him now, through the long vista of twenty-seven years, as he stood watching me, going down the mountain, back into the world from which he was cut off ; separated for ever from all converse with his kind, and from all the sweet amenities of social life. He stood there, at the monastery gates, his deep-blue eyes straining their yearning gaze after me, as I slowly continued the laborious descent ; his arms crossed over his breast, his long gray garments streaming in the wind.



OUR LOG-BOOK.

ONE of the present writer's most pleasant remembrances is of an old Scotch nurse, with wrinkled face, high cheek-bones, low, broad brow, and large, kindly, keen gray eyes, which seemed to look *into* every object on which they fell. Nanny had known troubles—they had come “not singly, but in battalions”—but few knew of these from herself. The complaints and constantly-recurring tirades against the world and against individuals who had chanced to offend, which she was incessantly hearing among her fellow-servants and neighbours, drew from her no sympathy, scarce awakened a spark of interest. Invariably she dismissed the matter with the remark, “It taks a’ kinds o’ fouk to mak’ a world.” And what is so true of life, that a conscious or unconscious perception of it is absolutely necessary to anything like tolerant insight, is still more true of the novel—a kind of clarified reflection of life, in which, through the development of faithful types, life in its essential meanings should be brought closer to our emotional being than it can ever be by a survey of reality. To feel vicariously is the highest attainment of man, and by the very necessity he is under of interesting us, the novelist must, perforce, aim at making his reader do this. “It taks a’ kinds o’ fouk to mak’ a novel.” But there is one condition. No character should be there on *its own account*, but only for the sake of all the others. Goodness, in its concrete form—character—by its very essence, exists and works for others; and hence it is that, being the very opposite, badness only exists for the sake of goodness. Generally speaking, women’s instinctive perceptions of this truth are clearer, more powerful than those of men; and this may form one element in their success as novelists. At all events, it is not too much to say that in most cases when women have, as authors, sought to destroy all traces of their sex, they have consciously aimed at reflecting a view of life, and exhibiting a mode of treatment behind which is a base of fatalistic intellectualism. But enough: we are to speak of the recent novels of three ladies; and by way of further preparation only one word seems necessary.

As a faithful writer of fiction only values character in as far as it reveals that type which stands on the line parting real from ideal, visible from invisible, with varied relations to both worlds, separate works will thus only be partial expressions or revelations of unconscious spiritual insight. No man can absolutely express all he means; hence the strong temptation to transform real things into symbols

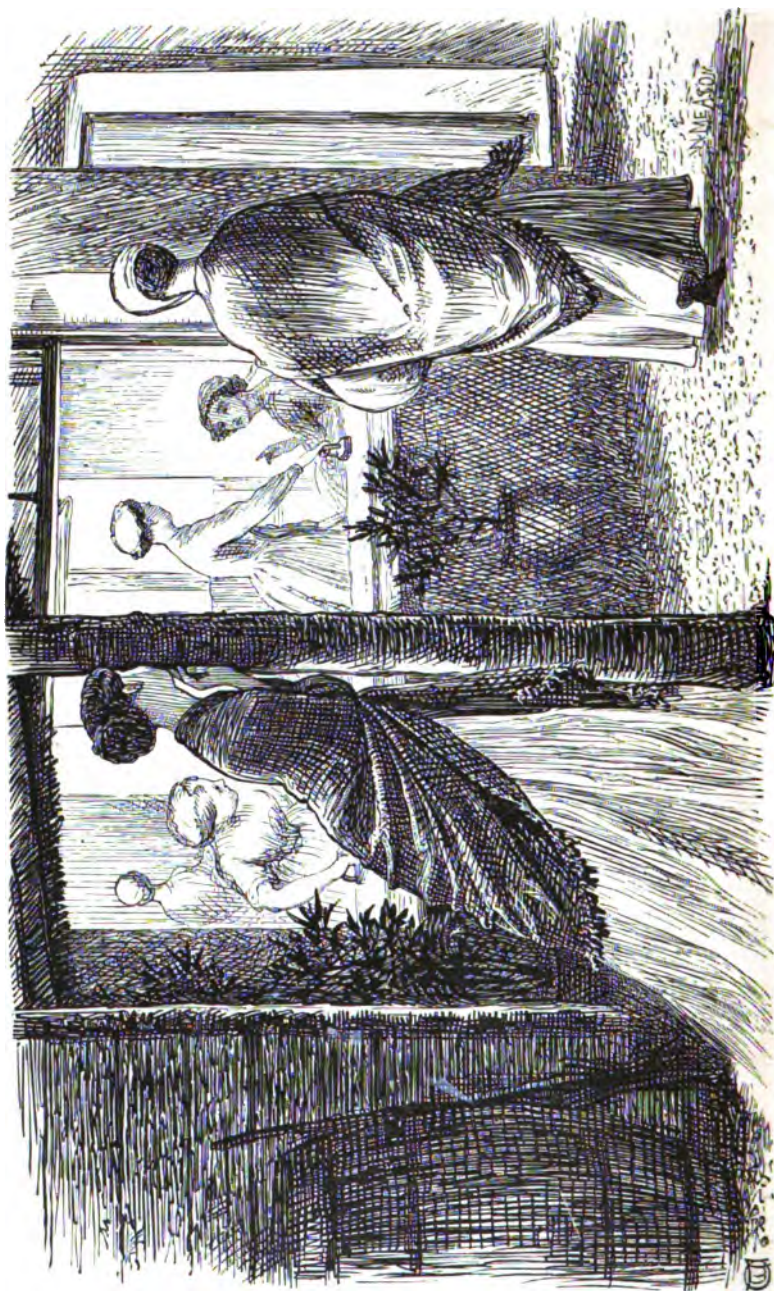
arbitrarily carrying a fuller volume of meaning than they do in themselves ; but just in the degree the poet or novelist does this, he becomes a teacher instead of a creator. The symbols ever tend to stand more and more separate and by themselves in the very measure they are multiplied—to become hieroglyphic, in fact ; while the more the true artist multiplies his types, they are the more united in mutual interpretation. Hence the duty laid on the critic not merely to criticize single points, but to have regard to the spirit of the whole ; and always, in the case of a writer who has produced many works, to try to read the one through the other : they are mutually interpreting, as are the varied characters in each work. “Charlotte Burney,” for instance, would perhaps, at first glance, give a careless reader the idea that it was written by an enthusiast in art, gifted with ready mind and fine taste, who, in a little of a dilettante spirit, had travelled about a good deal, seen much of artists, and, in reaction against circumstances, taken rather a dislike to a certain order of middle-class society. But though this has been done, it is somewhat short-sighted and unjust. When we remember the quiet, incisive force and patient, steady insight of “A Bad Beginning,” and the masterly grasp of widely-contrasted characters in “Hester Kirton,” we get some new light by which to read the later work. “Hester Kirton” is one of the finest novels we have read for long. With the exception of George Eliot, Miss Thackeray, and parts of Mrs. Oliphant’s “Agnes”—of whom, by the bye, “Hester Kirton” occasionally reminds us, though radically different in conception, and certainly superior in respect of clear, decided artistic presentation—we have not had recently from any lady more steady, faithful, and sustainedly-elaborate character-painting than is to be found in “Hester Kirton.” The situations, too, are most effectively chosen, though a clear simplicity obtains throughout ; and, as a whole, the novel gives the impression of most masterly skill in analysis, combined with that light gracefulness of movement which imparts such a charm to women’s novels, yet which is seldom found associated with dramatic power. There are no deep-cut lines of plot in “Hester Kirton,” and it is possible hurried readers would miss many beauties ; but no one reading with the least thought could fail to perceive power in the development of Hester’s nature : the shy reserve veiling still depths which—once quickened by a sense of ignorance out of that “animalism” which Hegel says Paradise must have been—rose, and, like the mystic well in Tennyson’s Idylls, calm to all else, stirred wildly round the sword’s point, if but touched. Then Old Kirton, and Mr. Hallam, and Lucy, and Biz were quite distinct, typical, and *unforgettable* characters. Now, the remembrance of all this made us pause before declaring “Charlotte Burney” a mere dilettante novel. We knew that Mrs. Macquoid could do other and higher work than write clever artists’ talk, and we glanced at the novel a second time ere

we wrote a word. And we must give it as our impression that, though special technicalities are always unadvisable in a work of fiction, and should be used sparingly, Mrs. Macquoid has here used them with dramatic skill and aim. Michael Sharpe views art differently from Henry Kingsley, and in their talk of art we get glimpses of character which, lightly dwelt on, disentangle themselves, though almost imperceptibly, in their relations with the two sisters Burney. Mrs. Macquoid has, however, in our opinion, to some extent erred in not giving her story a wider interest. It moves pretty much round and round in one little circle which advances as it circles, but too softly and steadily to satisfy the large novel-reading public. The relation in which Matthew Sharpe's stepmother stands to Mrs. Rumbold is perceived from the very first, and the interest suffers a little from the fact of the story turning so much upon an improbability. That Mrs. Rumbold, who had fled from a friend's house because of Mr. Prendergast's presence there, should at once admit him to her confidence when she meets him abroad, is not likely, to say the least, unless something powerful had been plainly made to act on poor, vulgar Mrs. Rumbold's hopes or fears. "Be bold, be bold," is as good advice here as elsewhere. Mrs. Macquoid would, perhaps, have succeeded better had she mixed a little more mystery and wickedness in her improbabilities. But "*Charlotte Burney*" is a good novel, though altogether of a lighter texture than her former ones. It must, in fact, be viewed as an experiment, which we are sure Mrs. Macquoid has profited by, if we may judge from short stories, which have more recently appeared in the Magazines. We hope soon to meet her again on broader and surer ground than she has traversed in "*Charlotte Burney*."

"*Grace's Fortune*" has this resemblance to "*Charlotte Burney*," that wickedness is not, after the fashion of the new school, presented *for its own sake*, made much of, tricked out, and gloated over. These writers never forget what is due to English gentlewomen. Both regard bad people somewhat as Mr. Sutherland Edwards makes the Russian General regard the spy. "Boutkovitch," says he, "is an animal, an insect—whatever you please; he is a necessary evil." Both writers, therefore, try to get rid of positive badness. Of both it may be said, that their novels would have been better had the central interest been deepened by the action of evil *disturbing* a little more the circle of conventional arrangement, even to sufficiently justify virtue and goodness in the proper trial of them. Thoughtful readers of this novel, we fear, will feel that that circumstances were scarcely sufficient to justify Grace's great sacrifice of the man she loved, and that the author most unguardedly made Grace half needlessly sacrifice herself. But "*Grace's Fortune*" displays talent, good taste, large knowledge of society, and its chief fault is more than redeemed by an exquisite fluent tenderness, and a delicate womanly reserve, which is most welcome in these days. Great dramatic power is certainly not shown in "*Grace's Fortune*," but there is a keen

sense of reality and fitness, which has enabled the writer to maintain clear lines of character. There are fine bits of description ; the situations are natural, and the dialogue is free and unencumbered—nay, it is even here and there keen and trenchant, with a genuine smack of society in it. Mrs. Macquoid has keener analysis, and can freely traverse a wider circle of character ; but the works of both are properly reactions against the sensational school, and sometimes, through fear of affinity with them, both writers sacrifice overmuch to simplicity of motive.

Miss Thackeray, whose novels we have just carefully re-read, differs from these writers, inasmuch as she never *consciously* sacrifices anything in the same way. Her novels stand in somewhat the same relation to prose fiction as Browning's "Dramatic Lyrics" do to common acting-plays. They are confessions ; and would sometimes pain us with a little feeling of unreserve, were it not that her calm, steady mode of treatment carries with it a dramatic justification. The lyrical note, liquid and clear, sounds through the whole, and it gets strange resonance in echo back from a strange fatefulness in the distance, yet always near, moving like an awful thunder-cloud over the clear serenity of the landscape. The play of subtle, helpless, self-absorbed emotion against the hard front of adverse facts, narrowing coldly in upon it as it becomes more keen, is what Miss Thackeray specially succeeds in depicting. A character is made to speak to us out of an element of *doom* ; and this element, faithfully perceived as a strange mysterious fact of life, gives a reasonable colouring to much (just as in the Greek plays) which, dis severed in the least from that vital root, would distract and displease. However much certain theological minds may try to explain away the fatalistic idea as a mode of thought, it returns ever in awfulest forms as an element of life ; and will therefore constantly re-appear in art, whenever we find a really original artist. This is the critical justification of the strange history of Elizabeth Gilmour, whatever exception may fall to be made respecting separate details, and also of the touching life of the noble peasant Reine, doomed to a sphere to which she seems all so foreign. That the world is full of such disharmony between nature and circumstances, between the soul and the atmosphere in which it is cast, has in all times struck thoughtful minds with pathetic and mysterious wonder. So has it struck Miss Thackeray, only she is just, perhaps, a little too absorbed in the idea ; for if the Greeks had their relief in healthful delight in Nature, is it not possible to us to have our relief also ? Miss Thackeray, so far following her gifted father, is a reaction, partially against the sentimentalists, partly against the unrelieved simplicity of the anti-sensationalists ; and her only fault is, that she is a little too conscious of all this. But she is decidedly a quiet force in current fiction.



"Some one came quickly down the path at this juncture."

THE ARGOSY.

MAY 1, 1868.

ANNE HEREFORD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE."

CHAPTER XI.

THE NEW TENANT BY THE LODGE GATES.

THE new tenant by the lodge gates! And it was Edwin Barley! What could have brought him to Chandos? Was it to look after ME?

The conviction, that it was so, fixed itself in my mind with startling force, and I grew nearly as sick with fear as I had been when I was a little child. That he was personally unknown to the Chandos family was evident: it seemed a strange thing that he should come and plant himself down at their very gates as soon as I became an inmate in the family. Had he in some crafty manner made himself acquainted with my entrance to it the very hour it took place? Surely it must have been so. And he had lost no time in following.

When once suspicion connected with fear arises in man's mind, or in woman's, the most trifling circumstances are allowed to confirm it. Events, however unconnected with it in reality, accidental coincidences that have no rapport (I'm afraid that's a French word, but I can't help it) with it whatever, are converted by the suggestive imagination into suspicious proofs, and looked upon as links in the chain. It might have occurred to my mind—it did occur to it—to see that it was just within the range of possibility Mr. Edwin Barley's advent had nothing whatever to do with me or my presence at Chandos, that it might be wholly unconnected with it, and he ignorant of it and of who I was; but I threw this view away at once in my fear, and did not glance at it a second time. Edwin Barley had come to Chandos because I was there, and no power of reasoning could have removed this impression from me. All these years and he had never (so far as appeared) sought to put

himself in personal connection with the family: why should he have done it now, save for my presence in it?

Thought is quick. Before Mr. Chandos returned to me from watching Edwin Barley out at the lodge gates and across the road, I had gone over it all in my mind, and arrived at my unpleasant conviction. Some dim idea of putting as great a space of ground between me and him as was practicable, caused me to rise hastily from the garden-chair and return in-doors. Mr. Chandos walked by my side, talking of various things—the leaves that were beginning to fall, the fineness of the early autumn day, the discontent of Mr. Nero in his new home at the farmer's—having apparently forgotten already the episode of the intrusion. I answered in monosyllables, scarcely knowing what, my mind full of its new troubles.

I had done no harm during my short sojourn at Mr. Edwin Barley's, in those long-past days; I had never heard of or from him since; he had never, so far as I knew, inquired after me; so why should I fear him now? I cannot answer this: I have never been able to answer it—no, not even since things, dark and mysterious then, have been made clear. The fear had taken possession of me, and probably seemed all the worse because it was vague and inexplicable.

Luncheon was on the table when we turned into the oak-parlour, and Lady Chandos ready for it. Hickens was uncorking a bottle of claret.

"Harry, Hickens says that our new tenant has arrived," observed Lady Chandos.

We were sitting down then, and Mr. Chandos did not immediately reply. Perhaps Hickens thought the news required confirmation, for he turned round from the sideboard.

"The gentleman took possession last night, sir; so Brooks tells me: himself and three or four servants. It is only a single gentleman; there's no family. Immensely rich, they say."

"Do you know who he is, Harry?" pursued Lady Chandos.

"I don't know who he is, but I have just seen himself," replied Mr. Chandos. "He came in at our gates, deeming Chandos public property. I had to warn him off by telling him it was private."

"What did he want?" asked Lady Chandos.

"Nothing, except to look about him. Had I known he was your new tenant, I might not have been in so great a hurry to eject him."

"Oh, but, Harry, it was as well to do it. Better to let him understand from the first that we cannot have strangers entering here at will. It would not suit me, you know; I like privacy."

"That is what I told him."

"I suppose you were civil?"

"Quite civil, both of us—on the surface, at any rate. I did not take to him at first sight; that is, to his looks; and I don't fancy he took to

me. There was something peculiar in the tone of his voice, and he eyed me as though he wished to take my photograph."

"He did not know you, I dare say."

"He said he supposed he was speaking to Mr. Harry Chandos. Perhaps he thought it discourteous to be warned off in that manner. Not that he looks like one to go in for much courtesy himself: there was an air of independence about him *almost* bordering upon insolence. This young lady, I fancy, was not prepossessed in his favour."

I had sat with my head bent on my plate, trying to seem unconcerned, as if the matter were no business of mine. The sudden address of Mr. Chandos turned my face crimson. Lady Chandos looked at me.

"He—he is very ugly," I stammered in my perplexity.

"Is he?" she cried, turning to her son.

"He is rather ill-favoured, mother; a short, dark man."

"What is his name?"

"I don't know," said Mr. Chandos.

"Not know his name!" repeated Lady Chandos, laughing slightly; "and yet you accepted him as tenant!"

"Oh, well, Dexter made all the arrangements. I did not interfere personally."

"I think, before I accepted a man as tenant, I should make myself acquainted with his name," spoke Lady Chandos, in a half-joking tone, evidently attaching no importance to the matter. "Do you happen to have heard it, Dickens?"

"No, my lady."

"We shall learn it soon enough," carelessly observed Mr. Chandos. "A man may not make a less desirable tenant because he happens not to have a handsome face. Tastes differ, you know, Miss Hereford. Were we all bought and sold by our looks, what a squabbling of opinions there'd be!"

The meal was nearly over, when a startling interruption occurred. Mrs. Chandos burst wildly into the room, agitated, trembling; her hands raised, her face ashy white. Mr. Chandos threw down his knife and fork, and rose in consternation.

"Oh, Lady Chandos! Oh, Harry!" came the words, almost in a shriek. "Do come! She has fallen on the carpet in a fit—or something. I think she may be dying!"

"Excited again, Ethel!" observed Lady Chandos, the perfect calmness of her tone presenting a curious contrast. "When will you learn to take trifles quietly and rationally? Who has fallen? The white kitten?"

Mrs. Chandos did not like the reproach. "There's nothing to blame me for this time," she said, with a sob of vehemence. "It is Mrs. Freeman. She is lying there on the floor, looking frightful. I am not sure but she's dead."

"Take care of her, Harry," said Lady Chandos. "I will see what it is."

"Shall I go?" he asked. "It may be better. You can stay with Ethel."

Lady Chandos only answered by waving him back, as she quitted the room. Mrs. Chandos trembled excessively, and Mr. Chandos placed her in an easy chair.

"Calm yourself, Ethel—as my mother says."

"What nonsense you talk, Harry! As if everybody could have their feelings under control as she has—as you have! Time was when I was calm and heedless enough, Heaven knows, but since—since—you know?"

"Yes, yes; be still now. I think you might acquire a little more self-control if you tried, considering that excitement does you so much harm."

"It weakens me; it lays me prostrate for three or four days. I don't know what other harm it does me."

"Is not that enough? Where is Mrs. Freeman?"

"She is in my dining-room. I will tell you what happened. We were at luncheon—that is, I was, for she sat by the window, and would not take any: she has complained of illness for three days. 'I think you might eat a bit of this fowl,' I said to her; 'it is very nice.' Well, she made no answer; so I spoke again. Still she said nothing, and I got up to look at her, wondering whether she could have dropped asleep in a minute. I went round the chair, and there she was with a face drawn in the most frightful manner you can conceive, and the next moment she had slipped from the chair to the carpet. And you and Lady Chandos blame me for not retaining my calmness."

"Will you take anything?" he inquired, pointing to the luncheon-tray; and it struck me that he wished to get the scene she had described out of her memory.

"No, thank you. The sight of Mrs. Freeman has taken my appetite away. Suppose you come and see her for yourself: I don't mind going with you."

Mrs. Chandos put her arm within his, and they departed. Hill ran up stairs; two or three of the maids followed her. Hickens looked after them in curiosity, and then came back to his luncheon-table. Not to be in the way of anybody, I went up to my room.

For some hours I saw nothing of anybody. There was bustle in the house. Lady Chandos's voice I heard now and then, and once I caught a glimpse of Mr. Chandos in the grounds. Getting tired of my confinement, I looked out, and asked a maid-servant, who was passing in the corridor, what had been the matter.

"It was a sort of fit, miss, but she's better now," was Harriet's reply. "The doctor says she must be still, and have rest for some time to come, and she is going away this evening."

"Going away! Do you speak of Mrs. Freeman?"

"Yes, miss. She is going by her own choice. She has a sister who lives about thirteen miles from this, and she wishes to go at once to her house. My lady urged her to wait, at any rate until to-morrow, but Mrs. Freeman says she would rather go, especially as she can be of no further use at present to Mrs. Chandos. They have a suspicion that she fears another attack, and thinks she had better get to her sister's without delay. So it's all settled, and Hill is to accompany her."

Harriet departed, leaving my door on the latch. I sat, reading and listening by turns, and presently there sounded two more encountering voices outside. Those of Lady Chandos and Hill, her attendant.

"My lady," said the latter, in one of those loud whispers which penetrate the ear worse than open speaking, "is it right that I should go to-night? I could not allude to it before Mrs. Chandos."

"Why should it not be right, Hill?"

"It is the full of the moon, my lady."

Lady Chandos paused before replying, possibly in reflection. "There is no help for it, Hill," she said, at last. "Mrs. Freeman is too ill to be trusted to the care of any one but you."

So Hill had to go. The carriage was brought to the lower door in the wing, unbarred and unbolted for the occasion, and Mrs. Freeman was taken down the enclosed stairs to it, by Mr. Chandos and the doctor, so that I and my curiosity saw nothing of the exit, which I looked upon as an unmerited wrong. She was placed in the carriage, and Hill and the doctor went with her.

It was getting near dinner-time. I scarcely knew whether to go down or not, or whether there would be any dinner at all, in the state of confusion the house seemed to be in, when my doubt was solved by Lady Chandos herself. Looking out at my door, she passed me, coming along the gallery from her own room.

"I think the dinner is ready, Miss Hereford."

Following her down stairs, I saw Mr. Dexter, the agent, in the open portico, having that moment, as it appeared, come to the house. Lady Chandos crossed the hall to speak to him. He put a sealed parcel, or thick letter, into her hands.

"I beg your pardon, my lady. As I was passing here, I brought up these papers for Mr. Chandos. The new tenant opposite says there's something amiss with the roof of the coach-house, and I'm going to call and look at it."

Lady Chandos glanced casually at the letter she held; and then a thought seemed to strike her.

"What is the name of the new tenant, Mr. Dexter?"

"Barley, my lady. Mr. Edwin Barley."

There was a startled pause. Lady Chandos suddenly put her hand to her heart, as if some stitch had taken it.

"Barley!" she repeated. "Edwin Barley! Do you know whether he comes from Hallam?"

"Hallam?—Hallam?" debated Mr. Dexter with himself, in consideration. "Yes, that *is* the place he comes from. I remember now. 'Edwin Barley, Esquire, of The Oaks, Hallam.' That's the address in the deed of agreement. Good-day, my lady."

She did not attempt to detain him. With the look of awful consternation on her livid face, she turned to come back. I slipped into the dining-room; and sat down in a shady nook by the piano, hoping not to have been seen. The cloth was laid, but no servants were in the room. Only Mr. Chandos, and he stood at a side-table looking into his desk, his back to the room.

"Harry! Harry!"

Turning at the tones of unmistakeable terror, Mr. Chandos came swiftly to his mother, and took her hand.

"The new tenant," she gasped—and I think it was the only time I ever saw Lady Chandos excited; she, who imparted always the idea of calmness intensified; who had reproached Mrs. Chandos with allowing emotion to sway her! "The man by our entrance-gates!"

"Yes, yes; what of him?" cried Mr. Chandos, when she stopped from pain. "My dear mother, what has alarmed you?"

"It is Edwin Barley."

"Who?" almost shouted Mr. Chandos.

"Edwin Barley. Here, at our very gates!"

Whatever the calamity the words might imply, it seemed nearly to overwhelm Mr. Chandos. He dropped his mother's hands, and stood looking at her.

"Is the agreement signed, Harry?"

"Yes."

"Then we cannot get rid of him! What can have brought him here? Here, of all places in the world! Chance, think you?"

"No. Chance it cannot have been. I told you the new tenant had an ill-favoured face. He——"

Mr. Chandos stopped: Hickens and the footman were coming in. The soup was put on the table, and we sat down to dinner. As I moved forward from my corner, quietly and unobtrusively, looking as if I had neither seen nor heard, Lady Chandos turned to me with a start, a red flush darkening her cheeks. But I don't believe she knows, to this hour, whether I had been present during the scene, or had come in with the soup and the servants.

The dinner was eaten in almost total silence. Lady and Mr. Chandos were absorbed in their own thoughts; I in mine. The chance words of the agent, "Mr. Edwin Barley, of The Oaks," had disclosed the fact that the simple-minded old man who had been so kind to me was dead, and his brother reigned in his stead, lord of all. A rich man,

indeed, Edwin Barley must be. I think the servants in waiting must have seen that something was amiss; though, perhaps, the silence did not strike upon them so ominously as it did on my own self-consciousness.

You cannot have failed to note—and I think I have said it—that there was little ceremony observed in the every-day life at Chandos. Ten minutes after dinner, tea was rung for. Lady Chandos sat while it was brought in, and the dessert taken away.

"Will you oblige me by presiding at tea this evening, Miss Hereford?"

Had Lady Chandos not preferred the request at once, I should have withdrawn to my own room, with an excuse that I did not wish for any tea. How miserably uncomfortable I felt, sitting with them, an interloper, when I knew they must want to be talking together, and were wishing me, naturally, at the other end of the earth, none but myself can tell. I poured out the tea. Lady Chandos drank one cup, and rose.

"I must go to sit with Ethel, Harry. Will you come?"

"She does not want me," was his reply. And Lady Chandos left the room.

He let his tea stand until it was quite cold, evidently forgetting it; forgetting all but his own thoughts. I sat in patient silence. Awakening later out of his reverie, he drank it down at a draught, and rang the bell for the things to be taken away. As the man left the room with them, I happened to look at Mr. Chandos, who was then standing near the mantel-piece, and caught his eyes fixed on me, something peculiar in their expression.

"Mr. Chandos," I took courage to say, "I am very sorry to be in this position—an intruder here."

"And but for one thing I should be very glad of it," was his ready answer. "It is a pleasant in-break on our monotonous life."

"And that one thing, sir?"

"Ah! I cannot tell you all my secrets," he said, with a light laugh. "Do you make yourself at home, young lady. But for your book, that I know you are longing to be reading again, I should have compunction at leaving you alone."

He quitted the room, laughing still. I reached the book he alluded to, and sat down again. But I could not read; the surprise was too new, and thought upon thought kept crowding upon me. *They* evidently had cause to fear Edwin Barley, far more than I; perhaps then, after all, he had not come here to look after me? What the matter or the mystery could be, I knew not: but unmistakeably there was something wrong between him and Chandos.

It was turned half-past ten when Lady Chandos came back again to the oak-parlour. I had got to my book then, and was buried in it.

Mr. Chandos followed her nearly immediately, and began to wish us good-night.

"You must be tired, Harry," she observed. "You have had a fatiguing day."

"I am tired," was his reply. "I shall sleep to-night without rocking. Good-night, mother; good-night, Miss Hereford."

He left the room. Lady Chandos said she was tired too, and she and I went out together. Mr. Chandos, who had stayed in the hall, speaking to Hickens, went up just before us, entered his room, and closed the door. I turned into mine; and I heard Lady Chandos traverse the long gallery and shut herself into the west wing.

Instead of undressing, what should I do but sit down and open my book again. Only for two minutes, of course, said I to my conscience. It was that most charming of all romances, whether of Scott's works or of others', the "*Bride of Lammermoor*," which Mr. Chandos had given me out the previous day. The two minutes grew into—but that I have to do it, I should not confess how many, especially as I could only guess at the number. My watch—the pretty watch of Selina's, given me so long ago by Mr. Edwin Barley—had latterly acquired a trick of stopping. It had been so delightful! sitting there with that enchanting romance, the window open to the bright night and balmy air.

Perhaps, after all, it was not more than twelve o'clock. I wound up the defaulting watch, shook it till it went again; set it at twelve by guess, and undressed slowly, and in silence. Then, putting out the light, I threw on a warm shawl, and leaned out at the window for a last look, before closing it. Which, of course, was a very senseless proceeding, although romantic. If Mademoiselle Annette could have seen me!

I 'stayed there, lost in thought; various interests jumbling themselves together in my mind. Lucy Ashton and the Master of Ravenswood; my own uncertain future and present disagreeable position; the curious mysteries that seemed to envelop Chandos; and the ominous proximity of Mr. Edwin Barley. As I leaned against the corner of the window, still as a statue, I was startled by observing a movement in the garden.

And a very extraordinary movement, too, if it was that of a rational being. Something dark, the height of a tall man, appeared to emerge from the clusters of trees skirting the lawn opposite, approach a few steps, and then dart in again; and this was repeated over and over again, the man advancing always nearer to the other end of the house. It was like the motions of one who wished to come on, yet feared being seen; a full minute he stood within those dark trees, each time that he penetrated them.

I watched, still as a mouse, and gazing eagerly, feeling like one chilled with a sudden fear. It was certainly very singular. When opposite the west wing, he stood for a minute out on the open greensward, and took

off his cap as he looked up at the windows. I recognized the features of Mr. Chandos. He wore a short cloak, which, in a degree, hid his figure; but there was no mistaking the face, for the moon shone full upon it. The next moment he crossed the grass, and disappeared within the narrow laurel path that led to the private entrance of the west wing.

How had he got out of his room? That he had not come out of its door, I felt sure; for I had been so silent that I must have heard it, had it opened; besides, that door of his would only open with a jerk and a creaking noise. If there was another door to his apartment, it must lead into the wing inhabited by Mrs. Chandos. Why had he been dodging about in that strange way in the grounds? and put on a cloak and cap to do it in, just as if he wished to disguise himself? And what could he want in the apartments of Lady Chandos in the middle of the night, when she was, no doubt, abed and asleep? Truly there *was* mystery at Chandos!

"Good morning, Miss Hereford."

The salutation came from Mr. Chandos, who was following me into the breakfast-room, having that instant quitted his own. I was going quickly; so was he; for we were late, and Lady Chandos liked punctuality. But she was not in the oak-parlour.

"That's right," he cried, when he saw the room empty. "I hope my mother has overslept herself too, and had as good a night as I have."

"Have you had a good night, sir?" came the involuntary question.

"Too good: a man does not want eight or nine hours' sleep. I dropped asleep the minute I got into bed last night, did not even hear my clock strike eleven, though it only wanted a few minutes to it; and I never awoke till twenty minutes to eight this morning. I was very tired last night."

Was Mr. Chandos mystifying me? Somehow it caused me vexation. My eyes had a resentful expression as I fixed them on his; which, of course, they had no right in the world to have.

"You did not go to sleep at eleven o'clock, sir."

"Indeed I did, Miss Hereford."

"Then you must have got up again, sir."

"Nothing of the sort! Why do you say that? I never woke until this morning!"

Standing there and deliberately saying this to my face, with every appearance of truth, could only be done to mislead—to deceive me. I had far rather he had struck me a blow; though *why*, I did not stay to ask myself.

"Mr. Chandos, I saw you in the grounds in the middle of the night!"

"Saw me in the grounds in the middle of the night!" he echoed.

"You were dreaming, Miss Hereford."

"No, sir; I was wide awake. It must have been getting on for one

o'clock. You had on a cloak and cap, and were dodging in and out of the trees."

"What trees?"

"Those opposite."

"Wearing a cloak and cap, and dodging in and out of the opposite trees! Well, that is good, Miss Hereford!"

His face wore an amused expression; his dark eyes—and they were looking dark as purple in the subdued light—were dancing with mirth. I turned cross. Some foolish thought, that Mr. Chandos would make a confidant of me in the morning, had run into my mind in the night.

"I don't possess a cloak, young lady."

"At any rate, sir, I saw you in one. A short one; a sort of cape. I saw your face quite plainly when you were looking up at the windows. The moon was as bright as day, and shining full upon you."

"It must decidedly have been my ghost, Miss Hereford."

"No, sir, it was yourself. I don't believe in ghosts. When you had finished your dance in and out of the trees, you crossed the grass to the laurel walk that leads down by the west wing."

"What do you say?"

The tone was an abrupt one; the manner had entirely changed: something like a glance of fear shot across the face of Mr. Chandos. But at that moment Hill came in.

"So you are back, Hill!" he exclaimed.

"I have been back an hour, sir. Mrs. Freeman's no worse, and I came by the Parliamentary train. And it is well I did come," added she, "for I found my lady ill!"

Mr. Chandos swung himself short round on his heel. "My mother ill! What is the matter with her?"

"Well, sir, I hardly know. I came to ask you to go up and see her."

"She was very well last night," he observed, striding up stairs on his way to the west wing.

"You had better begin breakfast, miss," Hill said to me. "My lady won't be down: I'll go and order it in."

"Am I to send any up to Lady Chandos, Hill?"

"I have taken my lady's breakfast up," was her answer.

The tea and coffee came in, and I waited; waited, and waited. When I had nearly given Mr. Chandos up, he came. His face was troubled, and he appeared lost in inward thought. He gathered that Lady Chandos's malady was serious.

"I fear you have found Lady Chandos ill, sir?"

"Yes—no—yes—not exactly," he said. "I don't hope it is nothing dangerous, but I don't think I will not be able to leave her."

"Is she in bed, sir?"

"No; she is sitting up. My tea? thank you. You should not have waited for me, Miss Hereford."

He took his breakfast in silence, ringing once for Hickens, to ask after a paper that ought to have come. Afterwards he quitted the room, and I saw him go strolling across to the pine walk.

CHAPTER XII.

IN THE IRONING-ROOM.

"WILL you allow me to repose a word of confidence in you, Miss Hereford and at the same time to tender an apology?"

Playing a little bit of quiet harmony, reading a little, musing a little, half an hour had passed, and I was leaning my back against the frame of the open window. Mr. Chandos had come across the grass unheard by me, and took me by surprise.

I turned, and stammered forth "Yes." His tones were cautious and low, as though he feared eavesdroppers, though no one was within hearing, or could have been, without being seen.

"You accused me of wandering out there last night," he began, sitting on the stone ledge of the window outside, his face turned to me, "and I rashly denied it to you. As it is within the range of possibility that you may see me there again at the same ghostly hour, I have been deliberating whether it may not be the wiser plan to impart to you the truth. You have heard of sleep-walkers?"

"Yes," I replied, staring at him.

"What will you say if I acknowledge to being one?"

Of course I did not know what to say, and stood there like a statue, looking foolish. The thought that rushed over my heart was, what an unhappy misfortune to attend the sensible and otherwise attractive Mr. Chandos.

"You see," he continued, "when you spoke, I did not know I had been out, and denied it, really believing you were mistaken."

"And do you positively walk in your sleep, sir?—go out of your room, out of the locked doors of the house, and pace the grounds?" I breathlessly exclaimed.

"Ay. Not a pleasant endowment, is it? Stranger things are heard of some who possess it: they spirit themselves on to the roofs of houses, to the tops of chimneys, and contrive to spirit themselves down again, without coming to harm. So far as I am aware, I have never yet attempted those ambitious feats."

"Does Lady Chandos know of this?"

"Of course. My mother saw me last night, I find: she felt unable to sleep, she says, thinking of poor Mrs. Freeman, and rose from her

bed. It was a light night, and she drew aside her curtains and looked from the window. But for her additional testimony, I might not have believed you yet, Miss Hereford."

"You seemed to be making for her apartments, sir,—for the little door in the laurel walk."

"Did I?" he carelessly rejoined. "What freak guided my steps thither, I wonder? Did you see me come back again?"

"No, sir. I did not stay much longer at the window."

"I dare say I came back at once. A pity you missed the sight a second time," he continued, with a laugh that sounded very much like a forced one. "Having decorated myself with a cloak and cap, I must have been worth seeing. I really did not know that I had a cloak in my dressing-closet, but I find there is an old one."

He sat still, pulling to pieces a white rose and scattering its petals one by one. His eyes seemed to seek any object rather than mine; his dark hair, looking in some lights almost purple, like his eyes, was impatiently pushed now and again from his brow. Altogether, there was something in Mr. Chandos that morning that jarred upon me—something that did not seem *true*.

"I cannot think, sir, how you could have gone down so quietly from your room. For the first time since I have been in your house—for the first time, I think, in my whole life—I sat up reading last night, and yet I did not hear you; unless, indeed, you descended by some egress through the east wing."

"Oh, you don't know how quiet and cunning sleep-walkers are: the stillness with which they carry on their migrations is incredible," was his rejoinder; "you must never be surprised at anything they do."

But I noticed one thing, that he did not deny the existence of a second door. In spite of his plausible reasoning, I could not divest myself of the conviction that he had not left his chamber by the entrance near mine.

"Is it a nightly occurrence, sir?"

"What—my walking about? Oh dear, no! Months and years sometimes elapse, and I have nothing of it. The last time I 'walked'—is not that an ominous word for the superstitious?—must be at least two years ago."

"And then only for one night, sir?"

"For more than one," he replied, a strangely-grave expression settling on his countenance. "So, if you see me again, Miss Hereford, do not be alarmed, or think I have taken sudden leave of my senses."

"Mr. Chandos, can nothing be done for you? To prevent it, I mean."

"Nothing at all."

"If—if Lady Chandos, or one of the men servants, were to lock you in the room at night?" I timidly suggested.

"And if I—finding egress stopped that way—were to precipitate

myself from the window, in my unconsciousness, what then, Miss Hereford?"

"Oh, don't talk of it!" I said, hiding my eyes with a shudder. "I do not understand these things: I spoke in ignorance."

"Happily, few do understand them," he replied. "I have given you this in strict confidence, Miss Hereford; you will, I am sure, regard it as such. No one knows of it except my mother; but she would not like you to speak of it to her."

"Certainly not. Then the servants do not know it?"

"Not one: not even Hill. It would be most disagreeable to me, were the unpleasant fact to reach them; neither might they be willing to remain in a house where there was a sleep-walker. The last time the roving fit was upon me, some of them unfortunately saw me from the upper window; they recognized me, and came to the conclusion, by some subtle force of reasoning, explainable only by themselves, that it was my 'fetch,' or ghost. It was the first time I had ever heard of ghosts of the living appearing," he added, with a slight laugh.

"Do you think they saw you last night?" was my next question.

"I hope not," he replied, in a tone meant to be a light one; but that, to my ear, told of ill-concealed anxiety.

"But—Mr. Chandos!—there are no windows in the servants' part of the house that look this way!" I exclaimed, the recollection flashing on me.

"There is one. That small gothic window in the turret. The fear that some of them may have been looking out is worrying my mother."

"It is that, perhaps, that has made Lady Chandos ill."

"Yes; they took me for my own ghost!" he resumed, apparently not having heard the remark. "You now perceive, possibly, why I have told you this, Miss Hereford? You would not be likely to adopt the ghostly view of the affair, and might have spoken of what you saw in the hearing of the servants, or of strangers. You have now the secret: will you keep it?"

"With my whole heart, sir," was my impulsive rejoinder. "No allusion to it shall ever pass my lips." And Mr. Chandos took my hand, held it for a moment, and then departed, leaving me to digest the revelation.

It was a strange one; and I asked myself whether this physical infirmity attaching to him was the cause of what had appeared so mysterious at Chandos. That it might account for their not wishing to have strangers located at Chandos, sleeping in the house, was highly probable. Why I was not I myself an illustration of the case in point? I, a young girl, scarcely a week in the house, and it had already become expedient to entrust me with the secret! Oh, yes! no wonder, no wonder that they shunned visitors at Chandos! To me it seemed a most awful affliction.

I quitted the oak-parlour, and went up stairs. Hill stood in the corridor.

"Lady Chandos is up, I understand, Hill?"

"Well, I don't know where you could have understood that," was Hill's rejoinder, spoken in a sullen and resentful tone. "My lady up, indeed! ill as she is! If she's out of her bed in a week hence, it will be time enough. I don't think she will be."

I declare that the words so astonished me as to take my senses temporarily away, and Hill was gone before I could speak again. Which of the two told the truth, Mr. Chandos or Hill? He said his mother was up; Hill said she was not, and would not be for a week to come.

Meanwhile Hill had traversed the gallery, and disappeared in the west wing, banging the green-baize door after her. I stood in deliberation. Ought I, or ought I not, to proffer a visit to Lady Chandos?—to inquire if I could do anything for her. It seemed to me that it would be respectful so to do, and I moved forward and knocked gently at the green-baize door.

There came no answer, and I knocked again—and again; softly always. Then I pushed it open and entered. I found myself in a narrow passage, richly carpeted, with a handsome oak door before me. I gave a stout knock at that, and the green-baize door made a noise in swinging to. Out rushed Hill. If ever terror was implanted in a woman's face, it was so then in hers.

"Heaven and earth, Miss Hereford! Do you want to send me into my grave with fright?" ejaculated she.

"I have not frightened you! What have I done?"

"Done! Do you know, miss, that no soul is permitted to enter these apartments when my lady is ill, except myself and Mr. Chandos? I knew it was not he; and I thought—I thought—I don't know what I did not think. Be so good, miss, as not to serve me so again."

Did she take me for a wild tiger, that she made all that fuss? "I wish to see Lady Chandos," I said aloud.

"Then you can't see her, miss," was the peremptory retort.

"That is, if it be agreeable to her to receive me," I continued, resenting Hill's assumption of authority.

"But it is not agreeable, and it never can be agreeable," returned Hill, working herself up to a great pitch of excitement. "Don't I tell you, Miss Hereford, my lady never receives in these rooms? Perhaps, miss, you'll be so good as to quit them."

"At least you can take my message to Lady Chandos, and inquire whether——"

"I can't deliver any message, and I decline to make any inquiries," interrupted Hill, evidently in a fever of anxiety for my absence. "Excuse me, Miss Hereford, but you will please return by the way you came."

Who should appear next on the scene but Lady Chandos! She came from beyond the oak door, as Hill had done, apparently wondering at the noise. I was thunderstruck. She looked quite well, and wore her usual dress; but she went back again at once, and it was but a momentary glimpse I had of her. Hill made no ceremony. She took me by the shoulders as you would take a child, turned me towards the entrance, and bundled me out; shutting the green-baize door with a slam, and propping her back against it.

"Now, Miss Hereford, you must pardon me; and remember your obstinacy has just brought this upon yourself. I couldn't help it; for to have suffered you to talk to my lady to-day would have been almost a matter of life or death."

"I think you are out of your mind, Hill," I gasped, recovering my breath, but not my temper, after the summary exit.

"Perhaps I am, miss; let it go so. All I have got to say, out of my mind or in my mind, is this: never you attempt to enter this west wing. The rooms in it are sacred to my lady, whose pleasure it is to keep them strictly private. And intrusion here, after this warning, is what would never be pardoned you by any of the family, if you lived to be ninety years old!"

"Hill, you take too much upon yourself," was my indignant answer.

"If I do, my lady will correct me; so do not trouble your mind about that, Miss Hereford. I have not been her confidential attendant for sixteen years to be taught my duty now. And when I advise you to keep at a distance from these apartments, miss, I advise you for your own good. If you are wise, you will heed it: ask Mr. Chandos."

She returned within the wing, and I heard a strong bolt slipped, effectually barring my entrance, had I felt inclined to disobey her; but I never felt less inclined for anything in my life than to do that. Certainly her warning had been solemnly spoken.

Now, who was insane?—I? or Lady Chandos? or Hill? It seemed to me that it must be one of us, for assuredly all this savoured of insanity. What was it that ailed Lady Chandos? That she was perfectly well in health, I felt persuaded; and she was up and dressed and active; no symptom whatever of the invalid was about her. Could it be that her mind was affected? or was she so overcome with grief at the previous night's exploits of Mr. Chandos as to be obliged to remain in retirement? The latter supposition appeared the more feasible—and I weighed the case in all its bearings.

But not quite feasible, either. For Hill appeared to be full mistress of the subject of the mystery, whatever it might be, and Mr. Chandos had said she had no suspicion of his malady. And, besides, would it be enough to keep Lady Chandos in for a week? I dwelt upon it all until my head ached; and, to get rid of my perplexities, I went strolling into the open air.

It was a fine sunshiny day, and the blue tint of the bloom upon the pine trees looked lovely in the gleaming light. I turned down a shady path on the left of the broad gravel drive, midway between the house and the entrance-gates. It took me to a part of the grounds where I had never yet penetrated, remote and very solitary. The path was narrow, scarcely admitting of two persons passing each other, and the privet hedge on either side, with the overhanging trees, imparted to it an air of excessive gloom. The path wound in its course; in turning one of its angles, I came right in face of some one advancing; some one who was so close as to touch me; and my heart leaped into my mouth. It was Mr. Edwin Barley.

"Good morning, young lady."

"Good morning, sir," I stammered, sick almost unto death, lest he should recognize me; though why that excessive dread of his recognition should be upon me, I could not possibly have explained. He was again trespassing on Chandos; but it was not for me, in my timidity, to tell him so; neither had I any business to set myself forward in upholding the rights of Chandos.

"All well at the house?" he continued.

"Yes, thank you. All, except Lady Chandos. She keeps her room this morning."

"You are a visitor at Chandos, I presume?"

"For a little time, sir."

"So I judged, when I saw you with Harry Chandos. That you were not Miss Chandos, who married the Frenchman, I knew, for you bear no resemblance to her; and she is the only daughter of the family. I fancied they did not welcome strangers at Chandos."

I made no answer; though he looked at me with his jet-black eyes as if waiting for it; the same stern, penetrating eyes as of old. How I wished to get away! But it was impossible to pass by him without rudeness, and he stood blocking up the confined path.

"Are you a confidential friend of the family?" he resumed.

"No, sir; I am not to be called a friend at all; quite otherwise. Until a few days ago, I was a stranger to them. Accident brought me then to Chandos, but my stay here will be temporary."

"I should be glad to make your acquaintance by name," he went on, never taking those terrible eyes off me. Not that the eyes in themselves were so very terrible; but the fear of my childhood had returned to me in all its force—a very bugbear. I had made the first acquaintance of Mr. Edwin Barley in a moment of fear—that is, he frightened me. Unintentionally on his own part, it is true, but with not less of effect upon me. The circumstances of horror (surely it is not too strong a word) that had followed, in all of which he was mixed up, had only tended to increase the feeling; and woman-grown though I was now, the meeting with him had brought it all back to me.

"Will you not favour me with your name?"

He spoke politely, quite as a gentleman, but I felt my face grow red, white, hot and cold. I had answered his questions, feeling that I dared not resist; that I feared to show him aught but civility; but—to give him my name; to rush, as it were, into the lion's jaws! No, I would not do that; and I plucked up what courage was left me.

"My name is of no consequence, sir. I am but a very humble individual, little more than a school girl. I was brought here by a lady, who, immediately upon her arrival, was recalled home by illness in her family, and I am in daily expectation of a summons from her; after which I dare say I shall never see Chandos or any of its inmates again. Will you be kind enough to allow me to pass?"

"You must mean Miss Chandos—I don't recollect her married name," said he, without stirring. "I heard she had been here; and left almost as soon as she came."

I bowed my head, and tried to pass him. I might as readily have tried to pass through the privet hedge.

"Some lady was taken away ill, yesterday," he resumed. "Who was it?"

"It was Mrs. Freeman."

"Oh! the companion. I thought as much. Is she very ill?"

"It was something of a fit, I believe. It did not last long."

"Those fits are ticklish things," he remarked. "I should think she will not be in a state to return for some time, if at all."

He had turned his eyes away now, and was speaking in a dreamy sort of tone. As I once heard him speak to Selina.

"They will be wanting some one to fill Mrs. Freeman's place, will they not?"

"I cannot say, I'm sure, sir. The family do not talk of their affairs before me."

"Who is staying at Chandos now?" he abruptly asked.

"Only the family."

"Ah! the family—of course. I mean what members of it."

"All; except Madame de Mellissie and Sir Thomas Chandos."

"That is, there are Lady Chandos, her son, and daughter-in-law. That comprises the whole, I suppose—except you."

"Yes, it does. But I must really beg you to allow me to pass, sir."

"You are welcome now, and I am going to turn, myself. It is pleasant to have met an intelligent lady; and I hope we often shall meet, that I may hear good tidings of my friends at Chandos. I was intimate with part of the family once, but a coolness arose between us, and I do not go there. Good day."

He turned and walked rapidly back. I struck into the nearest side walk I could find that would bring me to the open grounds, and nearly struck against Mr. Chandos.

"Are you alone, Miss Hereford? I surely heard voices."

"A gentleman met me, sir, and spoke."

"A gentleman—in this remote part of the grounds!" he repeated, looking keenly at me, as a severe expression passed momentarily across his face. "Was it any one you knew?"

"It was he who came into the broad walk, and whom you ordered out—the new tenant. He is gone now."

"He! I fancied so," returned Mr. Chandos, the angry flush deepening. And it seemed almost as though he were angry with me.

"I found out the walk by accident, sir, and I met him in it. He stopped and accosted me with several questions, which I thought very rude of him."

"What did he ask you?"

"He wished to know my name, who I was, and what I was doing at Chandos; but I did not satisfy him. He then inquired about the family, asking what members of it were at home."

"And you told him?"

"There was no need to tell him, sir, for he mentioned the names to me: yourself, Lady, and Mrs. Chandos."

"Ethel! he mentioned her, did he! What did he call her?—Mrs. Chandos?"

"He did not mention her by name, sir; he said 'daughter-in-law.' I did not tell Mr. Chandos that the designation made an impression upon me, establishing the supposition that Mrs. Chandos *was* a 'daughter-in-law.'

"And pray what did he call me?"

"Harry Chandos."

"Well, now mark me, Miss Hereford. That man accosted you to worm out what he could of our every-day life at home. His name is Barley—Edwin Barley. He is a bitter enemy of ours, and if he could pick up any scrap of news or trifle of fact that he could by possibility turn about and work so as to injure us, he would do it."

"But how could he, sir?" I exclaimed, not understanding.

"His suspicions are no doubt aroused that—that—I beg your pardon, Miss Hereford," he abruptly broke off, with the air of one who has said more than he meant to say. "These matters cannot interest you. You—you did not tell Mr. Barley what I imparted to you this morning, touching myself?"

"Oh, Mr. Chandos, how can you ask the question? Did I not promise you to hold it sacred?"

"Forgive me," he gently said; "nay, I am sorry to have pained you."

He had pained me in no slight degree, and the tears very nearly rose in my eyes. I would rather be beaten with rods than have my good faith slighted. I think Mr. Chandos saw something of this in my face.

"Believe me, I do not doubt you for a moment; but Edwin Barley,

in all that regards our family, is cunning and crafty. Be upon your guard, should he stop you again, not to betray aught of our affairs at Chandos, the little daily occurrences of home life. A chance word, to all appearance innocent and trifling, might work incalculable mischief to us, even ruin. Will you remember this, Miss Hereford?"

I promised him I would, and went back to the house, he continuing his way. At the end of the privet-walk a gate led to the open country, and I supposed Mr. Chandos had business there. As I reached the portico a gentleman was standing there with the butler, asking to see Lady Chandos. It was Mr. Jarvis, the curate.

"My lady is sick in bed, sir," was Hickens's reply, his long, grave face giving ample token that he held belief in his own words.

"I am sorry to hear that. Is her illness serious?"

"Rather so, sir, I believe. Mrs. Hill fears it will be days before her ladyship is down again. She used to be subject to dreadful bilious attacks: I suppose it's one of them come back again."

The curate gave in a card, left a message, and departed. So it appeared that Hill was regaling the servants with the same story that she had told me. I could have spoken up, had I dared, and said there was nothing the matter with the health of Lady Chandos.

At six o'clock I went down to dinner, wondering who would preside. I have said that no ceremony was observed at Chandos, the everyday life was simple in the extreme. Since the departure of Emily de Mellissie we had sat in the oak-parlour, and all the meals were taken there. In fact, there was nobody to sit but myself. Lady Chandos had been mostly in the west wing; Mr. Chandos out, or in his study; Mrs. Chandos I never saw. The servants were placing the soup on the table. In another moment Mr. Chandos came in.

"A small company, this evening, Miss Hereford; only you and I," he laughed, as we took our seats.

"Is Lady Chandos not sufficiently well to dine, sir?" I asked.

"She will eat something, no doubt. Hill takes care of her mistress. I met her carrying up the tray as I came down."

"I hope I am not the cause of your dining down stairs," I rejoined, the unpleasant thought striking me that it might be so. "Perhaps, but for me, you would take your dinner with Lady Chandos?"

"Nothing of the sort, I assure you. Were it not for you, I should sit here in solitary state, and eat my lonely dinner with what appetite I might. And a solitary dinner is not good for the digestion, the doctors tell us. Did any one call while I was out, Hickens?"

"Only Mr. Jarvis, sir. I think he wanted to see my lady about the new schools. He was very particular in asking what was the matter with her, and I said I thought it might be one of those old bilious attacks come on again. My lady had a bad one or two at times, years ago, sir, you may remember."

"Ay," replied Mr. Chandos; but it was all the comment he made.

"Is Lady Chandos subject to bilious attacks?" I inquired of Mr. Chandos.

"Not particularly. She has been free from them latterly."

"Did you know, sir," continued Hickens, "that we have had news of Mrs. Freeman?"

"No. When did it come? I hope it's good."

"Not very good, sir. It came half-an-hour ago. She had another fit to-day, in the forenoon, and it's certain now that she won't be able to come back here for a long while, if she is at all. The relation that she is with wrote to Mrs. Hill, who took up the note to my lady. Hill says, when she left her there were symptoms of a second attack coming on."

Mr. Chandos leaned back for a moment in his chair, forgetful that he was at dinner, and not alone. He was in a reverie; but, as his eye fell on me, he shook it off, and spoke.

"Her not returning will prove an inconvenience to Mrs. Chandos."

"I am afraid it will, sir," rejoined Hickens, who had fancied himself addressed; though, in point of fact, Mr. Chandos had but unconsciously spoken aloud his thoughts. Hickens had been a long while in the family, was a faithful and valued servant, consequently he thought himself at liberty to talk in season and out of season. "I warned Mrs. Chandos's maid, sir, not to tell her mistress about Mrs. Freeman's being worse," he went on. "It would do no good, and only worrit her."

Mr. Chandos slightly nodded, and the dinner then proceeded in silence. At its conclusion Mr. Chandos, after taking one glass of wine, rose.

"I must apologize for leaving you alone, Miss Hereford, but I believe my mother will expect me to sit with her. Be sure you make yourself at home; and ring for tea when you wish for it."

"Shall you not be in to tea, sir?"

"I think not. At all events, don't wait."

Dreary enough was it for me, sitting in that great solitary room—not solitary in itself, but from want of tenants.

I went and stood at the window. The wax-lights were burning, but nothing but the muslin curtains were before the windows. There was no one to overlook the room; comers to the house did not pass it; the servants had no business whatever in the front; and very often the shutters were not closed until bed-time. It was scarcely yet to be called dark: the atmosphere was calm and clear, and a bright white light came from the west. Putting on a shawl, I went quietly out.

It was nearly, for me, as dreary out-of-doors as in. All seemed still; no soul was about; no voices were to be heard; no cheering lights gleamed from the windows. I was daring enough to walk to the end and look up at the west wing; a slight glimmering, as of fire, sparkled

up now and again in what I had understood was Lady Chandos's sitting-room. Back to the east wing, and looked at the end of that. Plenty of cheerful blaze there, both of fire and candle; and, once, the slight form of Mrs. Chandos appeared for a minute at the window, looking out.

I passed on to the back of the house, by the servants' ordinary path, round the east wing. It was a good opportunity for seeing what the place was like. But I did not bargain for the great flood of light into which I was thrown on turning the angle. It proceeded from the corner room; the windows were thrown wide open, and some maid-servants were ironing at a long board underneath. Not caring that they should see me, I drew under the cover of a projecting shed, that I believe belonged to the brew-house, and took a leisurely survey. Plenty of life here; plenty of buildings; it seemed like a colony. Lights shone from several windows of the long edifice—as long as it was in front. The entrance was in the middle; a poultry-yard lay at the other end; a pasture for cows opposite; the range of stables could be seen in the distance.

Harriet and Emma were the two maids ironing; Lizzy, a very dark young woman of thirty, with a bunch of wild-looking black curls on either side her face, sat by the ironing-stove, doing nothing. These three, it may be remembered, have been mentioned as the house-maids. Another woman, whom I did not recognize, but knew her later for the laundry-maid, was at the back, folding clothes. They were talking fast, but very distinctly, in that half-covert tone which betrays the subject to be a forbidden one. The conversation and the stove's heat were alike wafted to me through the open window.

"You may preach from now until to-morrow morning," were the first words I heard, and they came from Harriet; "but you will never make me believe that people's ghosts can appear before they die. It is not in nature's order."

"*His* appears. I'll stand to that. And what's more, I'll stand to it that I saw it last night!" cried Lizzy, looking up and speaking in strong, fierce jerks, as she was in the habit of doing. "I sat up in the bedroom sewing. It's that new black-silk polka of mine that I wanted to finish, and if I got it about down-stairs, Madam Hill would go on above a bit about finery. Emma got into bed and lay awake talking, her and me. Before I'd done, my piece of candle comes to an end, and I thought I'd go into Harriet's room and borrow hers. It was a lovely night, the moon shone slantways in at the turret window, and something took me that I'd have a look out. So I went up the turret stairs and stood at the casement. I'd not been there a minute before I saw it—the living image of Mr. Chandos!—and I thought I should have swooned away. Ask Emma."

"Well, I say it might have been Mr. Chandos himself, but it never was his ghost," argued Harriet.

"You might be a soft, but I dare say you'd stand to it you are not," retorted Lizzy. "Don't I tell you that in the old days we saw that apparition when Mr. Harry was safe in his bed? When we knew him to be in his bed with that attack of fever he had? I saw it twice then with my own eyes. And once, when Mr. Harry was miles and miles away—gone over to that French place where Miss Emily was at school—it came again. Half the household saw it; and a fine commotion there was! Don't tell me, girl! I've lived in the family six years. I came here before old Sir Thomas died."

There was a pause. Harriet, evidently not discomfited, whisked away her iron to the stove, changed it, and came back again, before she spoke.

"I don't know anything about back times; the present ones is enough for me. Did you see this, Emma, last night?"

"Yes, I did," replied Emma, who was a silent and rather stupid-looking girl, with a very retreating chin. "Lizzy came rushing back into the room, saying the ghost had come again, and I ran after her up to the turret window. Something was there, safe enough."

"Who was it like?"

"Mr. Chandos. There was no mistaking him: one does not see a tall, thin, upright man like him every day. There was his face, too, and his beautiful features quite plain; the moon gave a light like day."

"It was himself, as I said," coolly contended Harriet.

"It was not," said Lizzy. "Mr. Chandos would no more have been dancing in and out of the trees in that fashion, like a jack-in-the-box, than he'd try to fly in the air. It was the ghost at its tricks again."

"But the thing is incredible," persisted Harriet. "Let us suppose, for argument's sake, that it is Mr. Chandos's ghost that walks, what does it come for, Lizzy?"

"I never heard that ghosts stooped to explain their motives. How should we know why it comes?"

"And I never heard yet that ghosts of live people came at all," continued Harriet, in recrimination. "And I don't think anybody else ever did."

"But you know that's only your ignorance, Harriet. Certain people are born into the world with their own fetches or wraiths, which appear sometimes with them, sometimes at a distance, and Mr. Chandos must be one. I knew a lady's maid of that kind. While she was with her mistress in Scotland, her fetch used to walk about in England, startling acquaintances into fits. Some people call 'em doubles."

"But what's the use of them?" reiterated Harriet; "what do they do? That's what I want to know."

"Harriet, don't you be profane, and set up your back against spiritual things," rebuked Lizzy. "There was a man in our village, over beyond Marden, that never could be brought to reverence such; he

mocked at 'em like any heathen, saying he'd fight single-handed the best ten ghosts that ever walked, for ten pound a-side, and wished he could get the chance. What was the awful consequences? Why that man, going home one night from the beer-shop, marched right into the canal in mistake for his own house-door, and was drowned."

Emma replenished the stove, took a fresh iron, singed a rag in rubbing it, and continued her work. The woman, folding clothes at the back, turned round to speak.

"How was the notion first took up—that it was Mr. Chandos's ghost?"

"This way," said Lizzy, as if from her longer period of service in the family she assumed to know more than the rest. "It was about the time of Sir Thomas's death; just before it, or after it, I forget which now. Mr. Harry—as he was mostly called when he was younger—was ill with that low fever; it was said something had worried him and brought the sickness on. My lady, by token, was poorly at the same time, and kept her rooms; and, now that I remember, Sir Thomas *was* dead, for she wore her widow's caps. At the very time Mr. Harry was in his bed, this figure, his very self, was seen at night in the grounds. That was the first of it."

"If there's one thing more deceptive than another, it's night-light," meekly observed the woman.

"The next time was about two years after that," resumed Lizzy, ignoring the suggestion. "Mr. Harry was in France, and one of the servants stopped out late one evening without leave: Phoeby it was, who's married now. She had missed the train and had to walk, and it was between twelve and one when she got in, and me and Ann sitting up for her in a desperate fright lest Mrs. Hill should find it out. In she came, all in a fluster, saying Mr. Harry was in the shrubbery, and she was afraid he had seen her. Of course, we thought it was Mr. Harry come home, and that the house would be called up to serve refreshments for him. But nothing happened; no bells rang, and to bed we went. The next morning we found he had not come home, and finely laughed at Phoeby, asking her what she had taken to obscure her eyesight—which made her very mad. Evening came, and one of them telegraph messages came over the sea to my lady from Mr. Harry, proving he was in the French town. But law! that night, there he was in the dark pine path again, walking up and down it, and all us maids sat up and saw him. My lady was ill again then, I remember; she does have bad bouts now and then."

"Do you mean to say you all saw him?" questioned Harriet.

"We all saw him, four or five of us," emphatically repeated Lizzy. "Hickens came to hear of it, and called us all the simpletons he could lay his tongue to. He told Hill—leastways, we never knew who did if he didn't—and didn't she make a commotion. If ever she heard a

syllable of such rubbish from us again, she said, we should all go packing: and she locked up the turret-door, and kept the key in her pocket for weeks."

"You see, what staggers one is that Mr. Chandos should be alive," said Harriet. "One could understand it if he were dead."

"Nothing that's connected with ghosts, and them things, ought to stagger one at all," dissented Lizzy.

"According to you, Lizzy, the ghost only appears by fits and starts."

"No more it does. Every two or three years, or so. Any way it has been once since the time I tell you of when Mr. Chandos was abroad, which is four years ago, and now it's here again."

"One would think you watched for it, Lizzy!"

"And so I do. Often of a moonlight night, I get out of bed and go to that turret-window."

Some one came quickly down the path at this juncture, brushing by me, as I stood in the shade. It was the still-room maid. She had a bundle in her hand, went on to the entrance, and thence came into the ironing-room. Hill followed her in; but the latter remained at the back, looking at some ironed laces on a table, and not one of the girls noticed her presence. The still-room maid advanced to the ironing-board, let fall her bundle on it, and threw up her arms in some excitement.

"I say, you know Mrs. Peters, over at the brook! Well—she's dead."

"Dead!" echoed the girls, pausing in their work. "Why it was not a week ago that she was here."

"She's dead. They were laying her out when I came by just now. Some fever, they say, which took her off in no time; a catching fever, too. A mortal fright it put me in, to hear that; I shouldn't like to die yet awhile."

"If fever has broke out in the place, who knows but it's fever that has taken my lady!" exclaimed Emma, her stupid face alive with consternation: and the rest let their irons drop on their stands. "All our lives may be in jeopardy."

"Your places will be in greater jeopardy if you don't pay a little more attention to work, and leave off talking nonsense," called out the sharp voice of Mrs. Hill from the background. The servants started round at its sound, and the irons were taken up again.

(To be continued.)

THE WORLD AND THE SONG.

BY CHARLES MACKAY, LL.D.

WHAT recks the lark in the morning sky
Of the ploughman in the furrow,
Whether he listen to the song,
Or drive his patient team along
With not a thought but—thorough?

What recks the nightingale in the wood,
Lamenting or adoring,
Whether the lovers in the lane
Bestow a thought on the bliss or pain
Of his passionate outpouring?

And what care I, oh, busy world,
Singing at night or morning,
Whether the music of my line,
Made for my pleasure, not for thine,
Receive thy praise or scorning?

I sing with the fresh green leaves around,
And the clear blue sky above me,
Not for the traders of the mart,
But for the soothing of my heart,
And the joy of those who love me.

So grind thy wheel, thou weary world,
Thou'rt not my soul's enslaver;
The free bird up in the morning air
Is as independent of thy care,
As I of thy lightest favour!

HALF AN HOUR'S WALK IN NORMANDY.

BY HESBA STRETTON.

THE perfection of a walk, as I understand walks, is to be found near Honfleur, in Normandy. Like a good sermon, or a sweet strain of music, a walk should not be too long for ordinary capacities, and there should be no tedious, uninteresting passage in it, which allows the spirit to fall back into brooding upon itself: all three should have variety enough, eloquence enough to charm the soul out of its dark inner cell, where it muses eternally over its own longings and emotions. A walk should be neither a march, nor an excursion, nor a pilgrimage, but a pleasure pure and simple, with no element of merit or self-gratulation about it; in short, no element of self at all.

Supposing, then, that we are at the right end of Honfleur, so as to escape passing through the dark, narrow, ill-smelling, badly-paved streets of a small French sea-port, we enter at once upon our walk by a road, half lane, half highway, which rises at a tolerably steep incline up the side of a hill. Standing at the bottom of this slope, and looking up it, is like looking along some vast green aisle, which does not contract itself into any narrow angle rendered dark by distance, but which, with a play of light and shadow, and the dance of sunbeams through the waving branches of the trees, allures the eye onward and upward to the point whither it leads—a small field of heavenly blue—you can scarcely tell whether to call it sky or no, against which stands a crucifix bearing the Christ; a Calvary they call it here, for the cross is set upon two or three tiers of steps, where, at any hour of the day, you may chance to see a picturesque group of worshippers on their knees. The distance up the hill is not more than ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour at the longest, though one must needs linger in mingled idleness and luxury of admiration. On the left hand rises the cliff, with its half of the tall, slim trees which form the avenue overshadowing thickly the ascent, and with a profusion of wild flowers and arums—lord and ladies of a regal purple and delicate creamy white, which would have made our hearts too big with joy when we were children. On the right, the crag—it is a sea-crag, though it is clothed with a soft surface-beauty of verdure—falls precipitately down to the low, alluvial strip of land which the earth has redeemed from the sea along the beach of the broad river Seine; a strip of land covered with orchards, where there are cherry and pear-trees as high as the elms of our own country, and cider-apple trees, with knotted or twisted

branches, which look like a mere brown tangle of twigs set upon their stunted trunks. If it be but spring-time, every bough has budded into thousands of blossoms, until every tree seems covered—not with snow, though that is the first word which rises to the lips, but with a whiteness almost snowy, only that there is in the heart of every flower a crimson or golden flush, which casts its own tint through the transparent, waxy petals, until over all there is a faint rosy tinge or a gilded lustre. In passing glimpses, between the close ranks of the trees, and through the tangle of the orchards, is seen here and there a sparkle of moving brightness, a glistering light which is not from the sky, but from its faithful mirror, the river flowing behind the veil of green leaves which screens it and hides it from us till we reach the summit.

The ascent finished, no laborious task in the shade, with a cool waft from the water stirring the air and rustling the leaves, we come upon a soft, green, smooth level,—a meadow it might be called ; but it is not enclosed for the growth of hay, and there are too many trees about it ; a grove rather, only the trees are huge and hoary, forest trees with gnarled and furrowed trunks, and foreheads like flints set against the shock of the tempests swooping towards them across the sea, which lies shimmering yonder in the sunshine like a great opal set in the dark blue rim of the sky-line. The trees are not closely ranged enough for a grove, but stand apart from one another in the grassy sward, only mingling their smaller branches over head, and interlacing their roots under foot. Beneath their shadow stands a quaint, ugly little chapel, with a round roofed porch, and three bells above it struck by hammers ; a place with no beauty about it, yet possessing a sort of homeliness in no unpleasant contrast to the majesty of the grand old trees surrounding it. The crucifix stands alone in a cleared space, looking across the sea, or, rather, across the Seine, where it meets the waves and tides of the ocean, and surrenders its waters to them. From the foot of this Calvary can be seen the broad stream of the river for thirty miles along its course between limestone crags, which put on every tint of crimson, and purple, and gold, as the sun rises and sets upon them ; while the clouds play fantastic tricks with the faithful waters, causing them to darken and gloom as they themselves roll heavily across the sky, or kindling them with stray gleams of emerald green and golden sunshine, which chase one another sportively up the long reach of the river. Now and then there flickers upon the stream, somewhere in some favoured spot which never chances to be where we are, a sort of rainbow mist ; not a rainbow, but a floating, fleeting vapour of violet, and amber, and ruby light, gliding hither and thither like some fairy will-o'-the-wisp. Exactly opposite to us is Harfleur ; no real place to us, but a dream-town, nestling in the rounded hollow of a green dingle, with a girdle of hills about it, and the river before it ; a thin, dream-like haze always drawn about it, and its church spire, like a gauzy curtain ; some-

times—though it is seven or eight miles away, so wide is the river which flows between us and it—we hear a clear chime of bells ringing to us over the water from that fair vision of a phantom city, but its very clearness and melody confirms us in our fancies. Farther on, towards the sea, running to a needle-like point into its tides, is Havre; and if the sun be set, dipping down as it does into the western waves beyond which lies England, there will be visible, upon the wonderful line of amber light which follows the sunset, two diamonds, sparkling more brightly than ever diamonds sparkled upon kingly brows, on the very front of the seaward headland of Havre. They tell you they are electric lights, the beacons which warn off vessels from the rocky coast; and being such, they are more precious than the most peerless brilliant; and the sky, or the earth—you cannot tell which—wears them proudly, and as the night settles down they burn with brighter and purer lustre.

Beyond Havre lies the open sea; that most changeful and most fascinating of all creatures. Whether it be in storm or calm, one's eye never wearies of the water. But here, under the Calvary on the Côte at Honfleur, is the wedding of river-life with sea-life; out yonder, off the bar at Havre, are anchored a score or two of merchant-ships, waiting for the tide to float them into harbour. Under the opposite shore is a train of three or four vessels, with naked masts, being tugged up the river towards Rozen. Little boats, trimming their sails to the breeze, are steering homewards to the little port of Honfleur; or, it may be, you will see a procession of small craft coming in from a reef of rocks some few miles out at sea, where the fishwomen go at low water to pick up the shell-fish left by the tide; you can hear their laughter, and see the gleam of their white caps, as the boats glide along at the foot of the cliff, with a noiseless, almost imperceptible motion, which awakens the same sense of unreality as the fairy-like apparition of Harfleur opposite.

Leaving the grove of hoary elms, we enter upon a real lane, a thorough English lane, but with something more of luxuriant neglect about it than is often to be found in England now; a wild, sweet freedom, as if grass, and flower, and tree were left to grow at their own will. The tall, thin trees, shooting up in too close a companionship for full and separate strength, form a thick, high trellis of green foliage on each side; while the hedgerows, high above one's head, send out straggling sprays of rose-briars, clasped about with the tendrils of the honeysuckle. Here and there are a row of pollard-trees, with boughs growing out like a fan, or lying horizontally, so as to form a low ceiling of living verdure just above our heads. This lane has many turns, as every lane should have; and by-and-by we come to a rank of beeches, with limbs as rounded and smooth, I had almost said as muscular, as the limbs of some skilfully sculptured marble, and, like it, shining with a lustre which, catching the light upon its delicate curves, reflects it in a soft, silvery brightness. A few paces beyond we look down into a dell,

so thronged with multitudinous sylvan life that the greatest city in the world is sparsely populated in comparison. What tragedies are wrought out here ! what miseries and joys are consummated ! Standing still for a minute, we hear the numberless diversities of voices which haunt the woods, from the clear, glad song of the blackbird to the low, feeble note of the grasshopper, inaudible to many ears, and the familiar chirp of the cricket ; house-crickets which know nothing of houses or the delights of warm hearths.

Another row of beeches, looking a little more battered and weather-worn than the first, with less lustre upon them, and we come upon a heath—a sweet, breezy heath, with a gorgeous mantle of purple heather and yellow gorse, and its rich lining of the brightest green. The sea seems to enfold it with its glassy belt ; but, in reality, it is lifted high above its reach, on a level with the summit of the ascent by which we gained the Calvary. The air is scented from its own purity, for the freshness of the sea-breeze is added to the freshness of the high, open flat, where the winds love to meet. What was lacking in the bordered lane, and amidst the trees, is found in perfection here. The grand vault of the sky sweeps over you in round, free outlines, intersected by no earth-born line. You are under no shadow ; there is no limit to fret and confine your gaze. Off away to the west stretches the pearly ocean, shot through with many tints, changing colour and aspect every moment ; and nothing comes between you and it except the fine points of some young pine-trees, which border the heath in that direction. Nothing that is of the earth touches you, is near to you, except the two small spots of turf on which your feet rest. A narrow band of glistening waters appears to lie between the edge of the common and the distant opposite shore, where are Havre and Harfleur. And before us, straight along the grassy path we are treading, lies the goal of our walk, a coppice of fir-trees.

A fir-wood—one of the grandest, gravest, loveliest, most solemn places to be found in this world. To enter it is like entering a cathedral ; the bronzed and slender shafts are like the polished pillars of a temple ; the curved and pointed branches overhead, with their solemn depth of shadow, are like its fretted roof. Under foot the earth is brown and soundless, with a carpet of fallen needle-like leaflets, which have died away from their places, as we do, unmissed in the eternity of the life of which they formed an undistinguishable part. There is seldom the chirping of birds, or the hum of insects to be heard, but always a low, shivering, awe-stricken murmur running through the topmost, trembling branches. They used to tell me, before I had ever stood upon the sea-shore, that the sound of the waves was like that ceaseless ripple of sighing in the tops of the pine-trees ; but there is no liquid splash here, such as the water rings out musically, none of the rhythm and rhyme of the sea, but in its stead a suppressed, almost

breathless, sacred tone of awe, which fills one with a profound quietude of spirit. There is no other sound like it ; no coppice like a fir-coppice. The yew-tree is too gloomy and too ghostly, the beech too earthly and sensuous ; one is almost a heathen among either of them ; but in a fir-coppice, silent and subdued, one is a Christian in a Christian temple.

And the silence is so silent ! All about you stand those unnumbered shafts which support the darksome roof above, and there is no crackling of branches, or rustling of dead leaves, as you walk to and fro along its aisles. If you listen very closely, you may hear the faint, tiny snap with which the fir-cones unloose their sealed scales, to set free the winged seed within them. But there is no other sound ; and your own voice grows softer if you should choose to disturb the almost divine stillness by any words of human speech ; until, with a sigh, answering to the eternal sigh through the trees, you turn away from the soothing lull and calm, and set your face once more towards the chattering streets you left half an hour ago.

For all this is contained within half an hour's walk, unhurried and leisurely ; and, therefore, I say again, what I said at starting, the perfection of a walk may be found near Honfleur, in Normandy.



TOO LATE.

ONLY a dreamful slumber,
But high has soared the sun ;
Only a moment wasted,
A duty left undone.
Only a word unspoken
(Was thine the blame, oh, Fate ?)
Only a promise broken,
Only an hour too late.
Only a half-hushed whisper
Instead of laughter sweet ;
Only a stranger shadow
Where once fell gentle feet.
Only the close-drawn curtains
Around a quiet bed ;
Only the white hands folded,
Only the peaceful dead.

SANKER'S VISIT.

HIS name was Sanker, and he was related to Mrs. Todhetley. Not expecting to go home for the holidays—for his people lived in some far-off district of Wales, and did not afford him the journey—Tod invited him to spend them with us at Dyke Manor: which was uncommonly generous, for he disliked Sanker beyond everything. Having plenty of money himself, Tod could not bear that a connection of his should be known as nearly the poorest and meanest in the school, and resented it awfully. But he could not be ill-natured, for all his prejudices, and he asked Sanker to go home with us.

"It's slow there," he said; "not much going on in summer besides haymaking; but it may be an improvement on this. So, if you'd like to come, I'll write and tell them."

"Thank you," said Sanker; "I should like it very much."

Things had been queer at school as the term drew to its close. Petty pilferings were taking place; articles and money alike disappeared. Tod lost half-a-sovereign; one of the masters some silver; Bill Whitney put sevenpence halfpenny and a set of enamelled studs into his desk one day, never to see either again; and Snapp, who had been home to his sister's marriage, lost a piece of wedding-cake out of his box the night he came back. There was a thief in the school, and no clue to him. One might mentally accuse this fellow, another that; but not a shadow of proof was there against any. Altogether we were not sorry to get away.

But the curious thing was, that soon after we got home pilferings began there. Ned Sanker was well received; and Tod, regarding himself in the capacity of host, grew more cordial with him than he had been at school. It was a sort of noblesse oblige feeling. Sanker was sixteen; stout and round; not tall; with pale eyes and a dull face. He was to be a clergyman; funds at his home permitting. His father lived at some mines in Wales. Tod wondered in what capacity.

"Mr. Sanker was a gentleman born and bred," explained Mrs. Todhetley. "He never had much money; but what little it was he lost, speculating in this very mine. After that, when he had nothing in the world left to live upon, and a wife and several young children to keep, he was thankful to take a situation as over-looker at a small yearly salary."

We had been home about a week when the first thing was missed. At one side of the house, in a sort of nook, was a square room, its glass-

doors opening on the gravel path that skirted the hedge of the vegetable garden. Squire Todhetley kept his farming accounts there and wrote his letters. A barometer and two county maps, Worcestershire and Warwickshire, on its walls, a square o' matting on its floor, an upright bureau, a table, some chairs; and there you have the picture of the room.

One afternoon—mind! we did not know this for a week after, but it is as well to tell of it as it occurred—he was sitting at the table in this room, his account-books, kept in the bureau, open before him; his ink-stand and cash-box at hand. Lying near the cash-box was a five-pound note, open; the Squire had put it out for Dwarf Giles to get changed at Alcester. He was writing an order for some things that Giles would have to bring back, when Rimmell, who acted as working bailiff on the estate, came to the glass-doors, open to the warm June air, saying he had received an offer for the wheat that had spurted. The squire stepped outside on the gravel path while he talked with Rimmell, and then strolled round with him to the fold-yard. He was away—that is, out of sight of the room—about three minutes, and when he got back the note was gone.

He could not believe his own eyes. It was a calm day; no wind stirring. He lifted the things on the table; he lifted the matting on the floor; he shook his loose coat; all in vain. Standing at the door, he shouted aloud; he walked along the path to the front of the house, and shouted there; but was not answered. So far as could be seen, no person whatever was about who could have come round to the room during his short absence.

Striding back to the room, he went through it, and up the passage to the hall, his boots creaking. Molly was in the kitchen, singing over her work; Phœby and Hannah were heard talking upstairs; and Mrs. Todhetley stood in the store-room, doing something to the last year's pots of jam. She said, on being questioned, that no one had passed to the passage leading to the Squire's room.

It happened at that moment, that I, coming home from the Dyke, ran into the hall, full butt against the Squire.

"Johnny," said he, "where are you all? What are you up to?"

I had been at the Dyke all the afternoon with Tod and Hugh; they were there still. Not Sanker: he was outside, on the lawn, reading. This I told the Pater, and he said no more. Later, when we came to know what had happened, he mentioned to us that, at this time, no idea of robbery had entered his head; he thought one of us might have hidden the money in sport.

So much an impossibility did it appear of the note's having been lifted by human hands, that the Squire went back to his room in a maze. He could only think that it must have attached itself to his clothes, and dropped off them in the fold-yard. What had become of

it, goodness knew; whether it had fluttered into the pond, or the hens had scratched it to pieces, or the turkeys gobbled it up; he searched fruitlessly.

That was on a Thursday. On the following Thursday, when Tod was lying on the lawn bench on his back, playing with his tame magpie, and teasing Hugh and Lena, the Pater's voice was heard calling to him in a sharp, quick tone, as if something was the matter. Tod got up and went round by the gravel path to whence the sound came, and I followed. The Squire was standing at the window of the room, half in, half out.

"I don't want you, Johnny. Stay, though," he added, after a moment, "you may as well be told—why not?"

He sat down in his place at the table. Tod stood just inside the door, paying more attention to the magpie, which he had brought on his arm, than to his father: I leaned against the bureau. There was a minute's silence, waiting for the Squire to speak.

"Put that wretched bird down," he said; and we knew something had put him out, for he rarely spoke with sharpness to Tod.

Tod sent the magpie off, and came in. The first day we got home from school, Tod had rescued the magpie from Goody Picker's grandson; he caught him pulling the feathers out of its tail; gave him sixpence for it, and brought it home. A poor, miserable, half-starved thing, that somebody had taught to say continually, "Now then, Peter." Tod meant to feed it into condition; but the Pater had not taken kindly to the bird; he said it would be better dead than alive.

"What was that I heard you boys talking of the other day, about some petty pilferings in your school?" he asked, abruptly. And we gave him the history.

"Well, as it seems to me, the same thing is going on here," he continued, looking at us both. "Johnny, sit down; I can't talk while you sway about like that."

"The same thing going on here, sir?"

"I say that it seems so," said the Pater, thrusting both his hands deep into his trousers' pockets, and rattling the silver in them. "Last Thursday, this day week, a bank-note lay on my table here. I just went round to the yard with Rimmell, and when I got back the note was gone."

"Where did it go to?" asked Tod, practically.

"That is just the question—where? I concluded that it must have stuck to my coat in some unaccountable way, and got lost out of doors. I don't conclude so now."

Tod seemed to take the news in his usual careless fashion, and kept privately telegraphing signs to the magpie, sitting now on the old tree-stump opposite.

"Yes, sir. Well?"

"I think now, Joe, that somebody came in at these open doors, and *took* the note," said the Pater, impressively. "And I want to find out who it was."

"Now then, Peter!" cried the bird, hopping down on the gravel; at which Tod laughed. The Squire got up in a rage, and shut the doors with a bang.

"If you can't be serious for a few moments, you had better say so. I can tell you this is likely to turn out no laughing business."

Tod turned his back to the glass doors, and left the magpie to its devices.

"Whoever it was, contrived to slip round here from the front, during my temporary absence; possibly without ill intention: the sight of the note lying open might have proved too strong a temptation for him."

"Him!" put in Tod, critically. "It might have been a woman."

"You might be a jackass: and often are one," said the Pater. And it struck us both, from the affable retort, that his suspicions were pointing to some particular person of the male gender.

"This morning, after breakfast, I was here, writing a letter," he went on. "While sealing it, Thomas called me away in a hurry, and I was absent the best part of an hour. When I got back, my ring had disappeared."

"Your ring, sir!" cried Tod.

"Yes, my ring, sir," mocked the Pater; for he thought we were taking up the matter lightly, and it nettled him. "I left it on the seal, expecting to find it there when I returned. Not so. The ring had gone, and the letter lay on the ground. We have got a thief about the house, boys—a thief—within or without. Just the same sort of thief, as it seems to me, that you had at school."

Tod suddenly leaned forward, his elbow on his knee, his whole interest aroused. Some unpleasant doubt had struck him, as was evident by the flush upon his face.

"Of course, anybody that might be about, back or front, could find their way down here if they pleased," he slowly said. "Tramps get in sometimes."

"Rarely, without being noticed. Who did you boys see about the place that afternoon—tramp or gentleman? Come! You were at the house, Johnny: you bolted into it, headforemost, saying you had come from the Dyke."

"I never saw a soul but Sanker: he was on the bench on the lawn, reading. I said so at the time, sir."

"Ah! yes; Sanker was there reading," quietly assented the Squire. "What were you hastening home for, Johnny?"

As if that mattered, or could have had anything to do with it! He had a knack of asking unpleasant questions; and I looked at Tod.

"Hugh got his blouse torn, and Johnny came in to get another,"

acknowledged Tod, readily. The fact was, Hugh's clothes that afternoon had come to uncommon grief. Hannah had made one of her usual rows over it, and afterwards shown the things to Mrs. Todhetley.

"Well, and now for to-day," resumed the Pater. "Where have you all been?"

Where had we not? In the three-cornered paddock; with Monk in the pine-house; away in the rick-yard; once to the hay-field; at the rabbit-hutches; round at the stables; oh, everywhere.

"You two, and Sanker."

"Not Sanker," I said. Sanker stayed on the lawn with his book. We had all been on the lawn for the last half-hour: he, us, Hugh, Lena, and the magpie. But not a suspicious character of any sort had we seen about the place.

"Sanker's fond of reading on the lawn," remarked Mr. Todhetley, in a careless tone. But he got no answer: we had been struck into silence.

He took one hand out of his pocket, and drummed on the table, not looking at either of us. Tod had laid hold of a piece of blotting-paper and was pulling it to pieces. I wondered what they were thinking of: I know what I was.

"At any rate, the first thing is to find the ring; *that* only went this morning," said the Squire, as he left us. Tod sat on where he was, dropping the bits of paper.

"I say, Tod, do you think it *could* be ——?"

"Hold your tongue, Johnny!" he shouted. "No, I don't think it. The bank-note—light, flimsy thing—must have been lost in the yard, and the ring will turn up. It's somewhere on the floor here."

In five minutes the news had spread. Mr. Todhetley had told his wife, and summoned the servants to the search. Both losses were made known; consternation fell on the household; the women-servants searched the room; old Thomas bent his back double over the frame outside the glass doors. But there was no ring.

"This is just like the mysterious losses we had at school," exclaimed Sanker, as a lot of us were standing in the hall.

"Yes, *it is*," said the Squire.

"Perhaps, sir, your ring is in a corner of some odd pocket?" went on Sanker.

"Perhaps it may be," answered the Squire, rather emphatically; "but not in mine."

Happening to look at Mrs. Todhetley, I saw her face had turned to a white fright. Whether the remark of Sanker or the peculiarity of the Squire's manner brought to her mind the strange coincidence of the losses, here and at school, certain it was the doubt had dawned upon her. Later, when I and Tod were hunting in the room on our own account, she came to us with her terror-stricken face.

"Joseph, I see what you are thinking," she said; "but it can't be; it can't be. If the Sankers are poor, they are honest. I wish you knew his father and mother."

"I have not accused any one, Mrs. Todhetley."

"No; neither has your father; but you suspect."

"Perhaps we had better not talk of it," said Tod.

"Joseph, I think we must talk of it, and see what can be done. If— if he should have done such a thing, of course he cannot stay here."

"But we don't know that he has, therefore he ought not to be accused of it."

"Oh! Joseph, don't you see the pain? None of you can feel this as I do. He is my relative."

I felt so sorry for her. With the trouble in her pale, mild eyes, and the quivering of her thin, meek lips. It was quite evident that *she* feared the worst: and Tod threw away concealment with his step-mother.

"We must not accuse him; we must not let it be known that we suspect him," he said; "the matter here can be hushed up—got over—but were suspicion once directed to him on the score of the school losses, the disgrace would never be lived down, now or later. It would cling to him, a ban, through life."

Mrs. Todhetley clasped her slender and rather bony fingers, from which the wedding-ring looked always ready to drop off. "Joseph," she said, "you assume confidently that he has done it; I see that. Perhaps you know he has? Perhaps you have some proof that you are concealing?"

"No, on my honour. But for my father's laying stress on the curious coincidence of the disappearances at school I should not have thought of Sanker. 'Losses there; losses here,' he said——"

"Now then, Peter!" mocked the bird, from his perch on the old tree.

"Be quiet!" shouted Tod. "And then the Squire went on adroitly to the fact, without putting it into words, that nobody else seems to have been within hail of this room either time."

"He has had so few advantages; he is kept so short of money," murmured poor Mrs. Todhetley, seeking to find an excuse for him. "I would almost rather have found my boy Hugh—when he shall be old enough—guilty of such a thing, than Edward Sanker."

"I'd a great deal rather it had been me," I exclaimed. "I shouldn't have felt half so uncomfortable. And we are not *sure*. Can't we keep him here, after all? It will be an awful thing to turn him out—a thief."

"He is not going to be turned out, a thief. Don't put in your oar, Johnny. The Pater intends to hush it up. Why! had he suspected any other living mortal about the place, except Sanker, he'd have accused them outright, and sent for old Jones in hot haste."

Mrs. Todhetley, holding her hand to her troubled face, looked at Tod as he spoke. "I am not sure, Joseph—I don't quite know whether to hush it up entirely will be for the best. If he——oh!"

The note of exclamation came out with a shriek. We turned at it, having been standing together at the table, our backs to the window. There stood Sanker. How long he had been there was uncertain; quite long enough to hear and comprehend. His face was livid with passion, his voice hoarse with it.

"Is it possible that I am accused of taking the bank-note and the ring?—of having been the thief at school? I thank you, Joseph Todhetley."

Mrs. Todhetley, always for peace, ran before him, and took his hands. Her gentle words were drowned—Tod's were overpowered. When quiet fellows like Sanker do get into a rage, it's something bad to witness.

"Look here, old fellow," said Tod, in a breath of silence; "we don't accuse you, and don't wish to accuse you. The things going here, as they did at school, is an unfortunate coincidence; you can't shut your eyes to it; but as to——"

"Why are *you* not accused?—why's Ludlow not accused?—you were both at school, as well as I; and you are both here," raved Sanker, panting like a wild animal. "You have money, both of you; you don't want helping on in life; I have only my good name. And that you would take from me!"

"Edward, Edward! we did not wish to accuse you; we said we would not accuse you," cried poor Mrs. Todhetley in her simplicity. But his voice broke in.

"No; you only suspected me. You assumed my guilt, and would not be honest enough to accuse me, lest I refuted it. Not another hour will I stay in this house. Come with me."

"Don't be foolish, Sanker! If we are wrong——"

"Be silent!" he cried, turning savagely on Tod. "I'm not strong; no match for you, or I would pound you to atoms! Let me go my own way now. You go yours."

Half dragging, half leading Mrs. Todhetley with him, the angry light in his eyes frightening her, he went to his bed-room. Taking off his jacket; turning his pockets inside out; emptying the contents of his trunk on the floor, he scattered the articles, one by one, with the view of showing that he had nothing concealed belonging to other people. Mrs. Todhetley, great in quiet emergencies, had her senses hopelessly scared away in this; she could only cry, and implore of him to be reasonable. He flung back his things, and in five minutes was gone. Dragging his box down the stairs by its stout cord, he managed to hoist it on his shoulders, and they saw him go fiercely off across the lawn.

I met him in the plantation, beyond the Dyke. Mrs. Todhetley,

awfully distressed, sent me flying away to find the Pater ; she mistakenly thought he might be at Rimmell's, who lived in a cottage beyond it. Running home through the trees, I came upon Sanker. He was sitting on his box, crying ; great big sobs bursting from him. Of course he could not carry *that* far. Down I sat by him, and put my hand on his.

"Don't, Sanker ! don't, old fellow ! Come back and have it cleared up. I dare say they are all wrong together."

His angry mood had changed. Those fierce whirlwinds of passion are generally followed by depression. He did not seem to care an atom for his sobs, or for me seeing them.

"It's the cruellest wrong I ever had dealt to me, Johnny. Why should they pitch upon *me* ? What have they seen in me that they should set me down as a thief ?—and such a thief ! Why, the very thought of it, if they send her word, will kill my mother."

"You didn't do it, Sanker. I ——."

He got up, and raised his hand solemnly to the blue sky, just as a man might have done.

"I swear I did not. I swear I never laid finger on a thing in your house, or at school, that was not mine. God hears me say it."

"And now you'll come back with me, Ned. The box will take no harm here till we send for it."

"Go back with you ! that I never will. Fare you well, Johnny : I'll wish it to *you*."

"But where are you going ?"

"That's my business. Look here ; I was more generous than some of you have been. All along, I felt as *sure* who it was, cribbing those things at school, as though I had seen it done ; but I never told. I just whispered to the fellow, when we were parting : 'Don't you go in for the same game next half, or I shall have you dropped upon ;' and I don't think he will."

"Who—which was it ?" I cried, eagerly.

"No : give him a chance. It was neither you nor me, and that's enough to know."

Hoisting the box upon to the projecting edge of a tree, he got it on his shoulders again. Certain of his innocence then, I was in an agony to get him back.

"It's of no use, Johnny. Good-bye."

"Sanker ! Ned ! The Squire will be fit to smother us all, when he finds you are off ; Mrs. Todhetley is in dreadful grief. Such an unpleasant thing has never before happened with us."

"Good-bye," was all he repeated, marching resolutely off, with the black box held safe by the cord.

Fit to smother us ? I thought the Pater would have done it, when he came home late in the afternoon ; laying the blame of Sanker's going, first on Mrs. Todhetley, then on Tod, then on me.

"What is to be done?" he asked, looking at us all helplessly. "I'd not have had it come out for the world. Think of his parents—of his own prospects."

"He never did it, sir," I said, speaking up; "he swore it to me."

The Pater gave a sniff. "Swearing does not go for much in such cases, I'm afraid, Johnny."

It was so hopeless, the making them understand Sanker's solemn truth as he did swear it, that I held my tongue. I told Tod; also, what he had said about the fellow he suspected at school; but Tod only curled his lip, and quietly reminded me that I should never be anything but a muff.

Three or four days passed on. We could not learn where Sanker went to, or what had become of him; nothing about him except the fact that he had left his box at Goody Picker's cottage, asking her to take charge of it until it was sent for. Mrs. Todhetley would not write to Wales, or to the school, for fear of making mischief. I know this: it was altogether a disagreeable remembrance, whichever way we looked at it, but I was the only one who believed in his innocence.

On the Monday another loss occurred; not one of value in itself, but uncommonly significant. Since the explosion, Mrs. Todhetley had moved about the house restlessly, more like a fish out of water than a reasonable woman, following the Squire to his room, and staying there to talk with him, as she never had before. It was always in her head to do something to mend matters; but, what, she could not tell; hence her talkings with the Pater. As each day passed, bringing no news of Sanker, she grew more anxious and fidgety. While he was in his room on the Monday morning, she came in with her work. It was the unpicking some blue ribbons from a white body of Lena's. There had been a child's party at the Stirlings' (they were always giving them), and Lena had a new frock for it. The dressmaker had put a glistening glass thing, as big as a pea, in the bows that tied up the sleeves. They looked like a diamonds. The Pater made a fuss after we got home, saying it was inconsistent at the best; she was too young for real diamonds, and he would not have her wear mock rubbish. Well, Mrs. Todhetley had the frock in her hand, taking these bows off, when she came to the Squire on the Monday morning, chattering and lamenting. I saw and heard her. On going away she accidentally left one of them on the table. The Squire went about as usual, dodging in and out of the room at intervals like a dog in a fair. I sat on the low seat, on the other side of the hedge, in the vegetable garden, making a fishing-line and flinging stones at the magpie whenever he came up to his perch on the old tree's stump. All was still; nothing to be heard but his occasional croak, "Now then, Peter!" Presently I caught a soft low whistle behind me. Looking through the hedge, I saw Roger Monk coming out of the room with stealthy steps, and going off

towards his greenhouses. I thought nothing of it; it was his ordinary way of walking; but he must have come up to the room very quietly.

"Johnny," came the Squire's voice by-and-by, and I ran round: he had seen me sitting there.

"Johnny, have you a mind for a walk to——"

He had got thus far when Mrs. Todhetley came in by the inner door, and began looking on the table. Nothing in the world was on it except the inkstand, the "*Worcester Herald*," and the papers before the Squire.

"I must have left one of the blue knots here," she said.

"You did; I saw it," said the Squire; and he took up his papers one by one, and shook the newspaper.

"Well, the blue shoulder-knot was gone. Just as we had searched for the ring, we searched for that: under the matting, and above the matting, and everywhere; I and those two. A grim look came over the Squire's face.

"The thief is among us still. He has taken that glittering paste thing for a diamond. This clears Sanker."

Mrs. Todhetley burst into a storm of glad sobs. I had never seen her so excited; you might have thought her an hysterical girl. She would do all sorts of things at once; the least of which was, starting in a post-chaise-and-four for Wales.

"Do nothing," said the Squire, with authority. "I had news of Sanker this morning, and he's back at school. He wrote me a letter."

"Oh, why did you not show it me?" asked Mrs. Todhetley, through her tears.

"Because it's a trifle abusive; actionable, a lawyer might say," he answered, stopping a laugh. "Ah! ha! a big diamond! I'm as glad of this as if anybody had left me a thousand pounds," continued the good old Pater. "I've not had that boy out of my head since, night or day. We'll have him back to finish his holidays—eh, Johnny?"

Whether I went along on my head or my tail, doing the Squire's errand, I didn't exactly know. To my mind the thief stood disclosed—Roger Monk. But I did not much like to betray him to the Squire. As a compromise between duty and disinclination, I told Tod. He went straight off to the Squire, and Roger Monk was ordered to the room.

He did not take the accusation as Sanker took it—noisily. About as cool and hardy as any fellow could be, stood he; a white sheet of angry retaliation shining from his sullen face. And, for once, he looked full at the Squire as he spoke.

"This is the second time I have been accused wrongfully by you or yours, sir. You must prove your words. A bank-note, a ring, a false diamond (taken to be a true one), in a blue ribbon; and I have stolen them. If you don't either prove your charge to be true, or withdraw

the imputation, the law shall make you, Mr. Todhetley. I am down in the world, obliged to take a common situation for a while; but that's no reason why I should be browbeat and put upon."

Somehow, the words, or the manner, told upon the Squire. He was not feeling sure of his grounds. Until then he had never cast a thought of ill on Roger Monk.

"What were you doing here, Monk? What made you come up stealthily, and creep stealthily away again?" demanded Tod, who had assumed the guilt out and out.

"As to what I was doing here, I came to ask a question about my work," coolly returned Monk. "I walked slowly, not stealthily; the day's hot."

"You had better turn out your pockets, Monk," said the Squire.

He did so at once, just as Sanker had done unbidden, biting his lips to get some colour into them. Lots of odds and ends of things were there; string, nails, a tobacco-pipe, halfpence, and such like; but no blue bow. I don't think the Squire knew whether to let him off as innocent, or to give him into custody as guilty. At any rate, he seemed to be in hesitation, when who should appear on the scene but Goody Picker. The turned-out pockets, Monk's aspect, and the few words she caught, told the tale.

"If you please, Squire—if you please, young masters," she began, dropping a curtsy to us in succession; "the mistress told me to come round here. Stepping up this morning about a job o' work I'm doing for Mrs. Hannah, I heard of the losses that have took place, apperiently thefts. So I up and spoke; and Hannah took me to the mistress; and the mistress, who had got her gownd off a-changing of it, listened to what I had to say, and telled me to come round at once to Mr. Todhetley. (Don't you be frighted, Monk.) Sir, young gentlemen, I think it might have been the magpie."

"Think who might have been the magpie?" asked the Squire, puzzled.

"What stole the things. Sir, that there pie, bought only t'other day from my gran'son by young Mr. Todhetley, was turned out o' my son Peter's home at Alcester for thieving. He took this, and he took that; he have been at it for weeks, ever since they'd had him. They thought it was the servant, and sent her away. (A dirty young drab she was, so 'twere no loss.) Not her, though; it were that beast of a magpie. A whole nest of goods he had got hid away in the brewhouse: but for having a brewing on, he might never ha' been found out. The woman was drawing off her second mash when she see him hop in with a new shirt wristban' and drop it into the old iron pot."

Tod, who believed the story to be utterly unreasonable—got up, perhaps, by Mother Picker to screen the real thief—resented the imputation on his magpie. The bird came hopping up to us, "Now, then, Peter."

"That's rather too good, Mrs. Picker, that is. I have heard of lodging-house cats effecting wonders in the way of domestic disappearances, but not of magpies. Look at him, poor, old fellow! He can't speak to defend himself."

"Yes, look at him, sir," repeated Mother Picker; "and a fine object of a half-fed animal he is, to look at! My opinion is, he have got something wrong o' the inside of him, or else it's his sins that troubles his skin, for the more he's give to eat the thinner he gets. No feathers, no flesh; nothing but a big beak, and them bright eyes, and the deuce's own tongue for impudence. Which is begging pard'n for speaking up free," concluded Mother Picker, as Mrs. Todhetley came in, fastening her waistband.

A little searching, not a tithe of what had been before again and again, and the creature's nest was discovered. In a cavity of the old tree stump, so conveniently opposite, lay the articles: the bank-note, the ring, the blue bow, and some other things, most of which had not been missed. One was a bank receipt, that the house had been hunted for high and low.

"Now, then, Peter!" cried the magpie, hopping about on the gravel as he watched the raid on his treasures.

"He must be killed to-day, Joe," said Mr. Todhetley; "he has made mischief enough. I never took kindly to him. Monk, I am sorry for the mistake I was led into; but we suspected others before you—ay, and accused them."

"Don't mention it, sir," replied Monk, his eye catching mine. And if ever I saw revenge written in a face, it was in his as he turned away.

JOHNNY LUDLOW.



AUNT FÉLICITÉ.

A NORMAN STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CHARLOTTE BURNEY," &c.

MADemoiselle TRUDIN turned fiercely on her mother as she came heavily down the bare, wooden stairs.

"See what thy delay has caused. Is it right, is it convenable, I ask thee, that a young creature like Geneviève should be seen in public alone with Monsieur Seton? Ciel! it is too insupportable."

"Chut! they have got Elodie." Madame Trudin was not nearly so much in awe of Félicité's anger as of the calm, cold, sarcastic mood by which she usually governed.

Her daughter shrugged her shoulders.

"Thou must go down and fetch her back. I will go with thee. Wilt thou have a shawl?"

Madame Trudin looked surprised.

"But I am not going; they will be back directly. I have seen plenty of crabs; why should not Geneviève see them also?"

Félicité tapped impatiently on the floor with the heel of her yellow boot.

"Dost thou not understand?—thou art mocking me. Thou canst not have forgotten all I told thee. Art not thou scandalised that Geneviève should be so indiscreet as to walk about alone with a gentleman?"

"Ma foi!" said the bonne-maman, with a hearty laugh; "I should like to see them; they would look a very pretty pair. Tiens—tiens—I forgot, my child; but if he is thy prétendu, he will be the child's uncle, thou knowest; so it is well he should learn to take care of her."

Félicité's heart swelled, and the tears came in her eyes. It seemed to her that her place in her mother's heart was filled; that Madame Trudin cared nothing for her future happiness in comparison with Geneviève.

She said this with a proud bitterness that roused her mother to perceive that something unusual was stirring within her.

"I have grieved thee, my child," she said, penitently; "but then, my Félicité, thou hast not been quite open with thy old mother. Tell me, has this Monsieur Seton made his proposal, or has he come here to-day to make it to me?"

"That is what I expect." Félicité blushed till she looked almost ten years younger.

"I am glad ; thou knowest thou art sure of my consent, and my blessing, with whoever thou mayest choose ; for thou hast been always good and dutiful, only I did not think thou wouldst have taken so young and so grand a husband."

These were delicious words to listen to. When anything seems too good to be true, to a heart made incredulous by disappointment, how hungrily it listens to its own hopes on the lips of others ! But Félicité roused herself to remember Geneviève.

"I think we had better look for them," she said, in a gentler tone. "Now Geneviève has grown out of childhood, thou dost not wish her to be much on the Plage when Dives is so full of company."

"Bon ! thou mayest get me a shawl."

But before they reached the sea, they saw the trio returning, Elodie in front, holding a great crab by a piece of stick, to which a smaller one also clung.

Seton was stooping over Geneviève, whose face was bent down, as if to avoid his gaze.

Félicité hurried towards them. The sight struck her with the force of a blow.

"Grandmamma has come to bid you good night, Geneviève. It is time you took her home," she said, aside, to Elodie.

"Hein," said that old woman, protruding her chin, and bending her brows, "that's as Mademoiselle Geneviève pleases. I can wait as long as ever she likes—Oh, you nasty, greedy brute ! do you want to eat the old woman's finger as well as the stick—a poor little finger that has done you no harm ?" This to the crab.

Félicité looked keenly at her mother.

"Geneviève, it is best to say 'Bon soir' now, *ma bonne petite*. Petit bijou !" the old lady murmured, as she kissed the girl's forehead.

Seton was about to propose escorting her home, but a glance at Félicité checked him. She met his eyes as they left Geneviève's, but she did not know how fully her own revealed the expression she had detected. She saw his glance droop, and she thought it was with shame at the double part he had been playing. If she could have read his heart then, all might have been well. He was literally startled by the blaze of sudden jealousy that one look showed him. It seemed to him dangerous to expose Geneviève to its influence, and he bade her good-bye so calmly and willingly, that the girl's heart again swelled with sorrow. Had no one courage to take her part against Aunt Félicité ?

"Ah, ciel !" said the conscience-stricken child, as she turned sadly away towards Nourrenne, "each time I have seen her to-day, I have felt full of bad and wicked thoughts. What would Father Aloysius say to me ? Surely I am possessed by an evil spirit. Well, when

I get back to Nourrenne I shall be myself again ; and yet I have found these three days so triste. I have been wishing—oh, what have I not been wishing !” She clasped her hands over her burning face, to stifle the answer she felt there. Something told her that the grasp now laid on her heart would never loosen ; that henceforth the longing unrest which so disquieted her would form a part of her being.

A cloud fell on her as the conviction mastered her. For refuge she fled to remembering the words of loving admiration and sympathy she had listened to on the Plage. Could they really have been spoken to her by this English Monsieur, who seemed, to the secluded, unsophisticated girl, a demigod rather than an ordinary mortal ?

Mr. Seton only reappeared once at Dives during the remainder of Félicité’s visit. He had made himself very agreeable both to mother and daughter after Geneviève’s departure, but he did not ask Madame to grant him a private interview.

Félicité grew timid and irritable. She had told Seton she should spend a week with her mother, and so she stayed on—or else she was eager to get back to St. Roque—to her piano, she said to herself, but really to the contemplation of the back windows of the Hotel de Paris.

The last day came, and in the evening came Mr. Seton.

Before he spoke, Félicité read in his eyes that he had not expected to see her at Dives ; and she resolved to stay and find out what was the real purpose of his visit.

He was pleasant and cheerful ; but all his empressment of manner towards her had vanished, and every now and then he was seemingly lost in thought.

“When do you return to St. Roque, mademoiselle ?” he said, as he bade them good evening. “I looked for you at your window, last night.”

Félicité started ; but she recovered herself before she spoke.

“I return there to-morrow ; but I did not know you were at St. Roque. The day we travelled down to Dives together, you said you were going to Dol and Coutances.”

She sighed involuntarily, for the remembrance of his words and looks on that day was too fresh not to be painful. Could it be possible that that few minutes on the Plage with Geneviève had undone all ?

When he was gone she took herself to task.

She had been morbid and fanciful in thinking his manner changed ; he was probably constrained before her mother, and would be all right when she again was at St. Roque. Félicité’s notions of les convenances gave her a restless night. It would not be proper for her to receive Mr. Seton alone ; scarcely, perhaps, to talk with him from her window. The only way would be to ask Madame Leroux to bring her needlework out into the yard below, and act as chaperon.

Two more days passed. The old life had begun again for Félicité in the Rue Puits d'Amour. But it was no longer dull. She seemed to dream through all the morning—to walk through it, as it were, on the tiptoe of expectation for what evening might bring. Hope grew so strong, that it bore her safely over the pits disappointment had dug in her way. Mr. Seton had appeared once at his window, and then he had only exchanged a few indifferent words; but still she told herself to be strong and patient. Why had he asked about her going back to St. Roque, if he had not wished for her?

On the fourth morning after her return—market-day—she found it necessary to go out to purchase some soup-herbs; she had exhausted the supply brought from Dives. Félicité disliked marketing. She was dignified, but she was not genial; and she hated to be addressed as “*ma jolie mam’selle*,” and “*ma petite dame*,” by the sturdy fruit and vegetable sellers; but to-day there was no Geneviève to send in her place.

She had bought her herbs and onions, and some French beans, and she stood waiting while these were shred up, ready for cooking. Two women came near her, talking so earnestly, that their words sounded out of the universal din.

“Chut! I say nothing; it might reach la tante’s ears, and then my sweet angel would be taken away from me for ever. Ah!”

The last sound was one of terror. Félicité had recognized the speaker’s voice, but she stood still, without turning her head. She guessed that Elodie had seen her; but she knew it would be worse than useless to attempt to force from her any explanation of her words.

Quietly and collectedly she made her way out of the market, without once turning her head in the direction of the flower-stall, and then she began to think—to piece facts together, until suspicions and certainty had grown into a picture that made her tremble with suppressed passion.

There was but one way open to her; her eyes must tell her at once the true meaning of Elodie’s words.

The clock was striking ten. The old woman would be safe in the market for two hours longer; or even if she had seen her, and hurried home, reckless of profits for that day, Madlle. Trudin would reach Nourrenne by the omnibus long before Elodie’s donkey-cart got there; that is to say, if she arrived at the starting-place in time.

Ah! there was the doubt. Nourrenne was six miles off; and yet, though Félicité was not a better walker than Frenchwomen of her class generally are, she decided, by the time she reached the little Place, to set off on foot if she were too late for the omnibus.

But she was not doomed to such a penance. She turned the angle of the church, and there stood the shabby little vehicle. She was only just in time. There was one passenger besides herself—a young abbé—but he was so deeply absorbed with his book that she might as well have been travelling alone.

She did not know her way to Nourrenne. She had asked the conductor to set her down at the nearest point to the little out-of-the-way fishing-village; after that, she must trust to chance to find a path to it; but Félicité was not timid or diffident of her own powers; what she willed, she almost always did; and when she was put down at a lonely point, where three roads met, she set forth on that shown her without hesitation. At first the road, on either side, was bordered by hawthorn hedges and grassy banks, shaded by the tall trees growing up behind them. Here and there appeared the roof of a high-pitched château, through its formal avenue of poplar trees; but these were few. Green orchards, laden with sunny-coloured fruit, showed through the hedge gaps, the barley or wheat harvest ready for the sickle beneath; but as the ground began to slope towards the sea, the soil grew looser and more uneven beneath Félicité's feet, and the orchards dwindled, till at length she found herself in a narrow dirty road, with waste ground on either side, overgrown with buckthorn and coarse herbage. Before her lay the glittering, opal-like sea, flashing unnumbered tints from its luminous expanse—not a curl of smoke, not a vestige of human habitation, to tell her that she was on the right track. She might be miles away from Nourrenne; and yet something—Félicité did not know what—the wonderful sixth sense, that comes to us all at times—warned her that she was near her quest.

She paused to think; she knew that the whole village of Nourrenne was made up of five or six cabins; Elodie's must be more inland than the rest, because of her garden. Could the cabins be down on the Plage itself, behind the cliffs, which, as the road descended rapidly, seemed to rise all at once a short distance before her, the path being channelled through them?

She was through the narrow cliff now, and before her lay the broad glittering sea: it was ebb-tide, and the rocks showed out in long black reefs: close beside them were the fishermen's cottages.

Félicité's heart gave a bound of relief and self-gratulation; her judgment never deceived her. In another moment her terrible doubt would be solved; the suspicion which as yet she had realized only as a dim phantom, that the man she looked on as her own lover had met Geneviève in secret at Nourrenne.

Far away along the shining sand the base of the cliff has crumbled away, and, overlapped by the upper portion, which is still firm and solid, forms a wide-mouthed cave, carpeted with shells and seaweed, and fringed overhead with long coarse grass.

A soft murmur comes from within the cave; it is the softest, sweetest moment of young Love's life—a maiden brought to confession, compelled to own in bashful, half-uttered words, as Geneviève owns now—that she loves!

She was seated in the cave beside Seton; his arms were round her, and her face was hidden on his shoulder.

"Say it again," he murmured ; " I can never hear it often enough, my darling, my precious Geneviève ; I cannot believe it yet, that this little heart is all my own for ever !"

He hung over her in an intoxication of delight and triumph. This was his fourth visit to Nourrenne, but, spite of her love, the girl's timidity had till now prevented him from owning his passion.

They sat still, neither of them willing to break that delicious silence of first happiness : such moments should be marked with white stones in all our hearts ; they never come twice to man or woman.

Seton was the first to speak.

"Look at me, my darling, for you are mine now. Ah ! how happy I will make you when you are my own dear little wife. If I ever cause you a moment's pain, it will be the bitterest memory of my life. Look at me, sweet one ; let me see in your own dear eyes that you believe me."

She raised them to his, liquid with unutterable tenderness. How little either dreamed of a watcher ! There came a slight cry of anguish, and then they started asunder, to see Félicité standing beside them.

Seton was on his feet in a moment. He grasped Madlle. Trudin's hand in both of his.

"I am alone to blame for this," he said ; "your niece knew nothing of my love till now. I am glad you are here : you will be, will you not, a valuable ally and friend with your mother?"

Félicité withdrew her hand.

"Does my mother know nothing, then, of this?"

She spoke involuntarily, and she repented her words, for she knew the encouragement they would convey to Geneviève.

Geneviève—whom she dared not look at—was suddenly transformed from a child into a bold, intriguing girl—the ruin of her hopes.

It seemed to Félicité as if hell were let loose in her bosom, and that unless she kept the tightest rein on her outward bearing, she must do some desperate act to slake the fire that was consuming her.

Her strong will helped her to be calm in speaking to Seton. She did not hate him ; he was merely a victim.

He answered her question in a confused, conscious manner that helped her self-control.

"I am not sure, Mademoiselle, whether your mother has received my letter. I was just telling Geneviève that I have written to Madame Trudin this morning to ask her permission to address her grand-daughter, and I intend to present myself for her reply this afternoon at Dives."

"I think, Monsieur, my mother will tell you you should have asked her permission before you presumed to address this—this—very young girl at all. In France, no woman, who has any regard for reputation, permits the slightest intercourse with an unauthorized suitor."

She looked at Geneviève, and the girl shrank trembling from the pitiless gaze, and burst into tears.

But Seton resumed his place beside her, and again clasped his arm fondly round her waist. He looked up haughtily at Félicité.

"Mademoiselle, will you permit me to say that I wish that point to be decided by your mother? It seems to me the best course open to us now, my Geneviève,"—he looked fondly into the sobbing girl's face,—
"is to go at once together to Dives, and ask your *bonne maman's* forgiveness. Do you not think so, Mademoiselle?"

"I cannot imagine you need my advice at this hour, Monsieur; you could have had it before, if you had really wished for it. There is one point on which I must be firm—I speak as my mother's representative—Geneviève must go with me to Dives; I cannot lose sight of her again."

She had somewhat mastered her anger, but when she saw the girl shrink from her, and turn her imploring face to Seton, it burst out in spite of her.

"Have you no shame, unhappy one?" she said, fixing her piercing gaze on her. "Think of your pure, sainted mother; think what the honour of your father would feel at your misconduct."

Seton tried to speak. Félicité stopped him with a haughty gesture.

"Monsieur, I cannot listen: this is purely a family question between me and my niece. You can, of course, follow us to Dives; but I tell you that I will not quit Geneviève again until I leave her safe under my mother's care."

Madame Trudin was sitting in her garden-chair, reading Seton's letter.

She had her silver-mounted spectacles on; but still that English handwriting was very difficult to master. The *t's* were "so pagan and outlandish," Madame said. However, when she had aided her perceptions by two or three pinches of snuff, she had a very fair comprehension of Mr. Seton's intentions.

She smoothed the paper over with her dimpled hand, and gave a little sigh.

"Poor Félicité! she is disappointed. But, then, she has doubtless deceived herself. It is the way always with women of her age; and it is my sweet little darling, then, that this young milord Anglais demands so loftily for his wife. *Ma foi*, it is hard to yield her! But what will you? When one reaches the descending side of the wheel one must always give place to those who are mounting. Yes, Félicité and I must both think of the child now, not of ourselves; it is hard, but it is natural."

She wiped a little tear out of each eye, and then, when she looked up presently at the click of the gate, there were the three wayfarers from Nourrenne coming up the serpentine gray path towards her. Félicité in advance, her face full of stern sorrow; Seton close to her, flushed and eager to tell his own story; and, lagging far behind the others, poor pale Geneviève, feeling almost as if she wished the earth

would open and cover her. Before Aunt Félicité could tell the grand-mère how she had found her, Seton pressed forward, and before Félicité could interfere he and Madame Trudin were shaking hands as if they were old friends.

"Then you are not displeased with my note?" He felt eager to get some definite words out before the aunt could speak. Spite of himself, he had a secret dread of her influence over her mother.

"I think you are a robber!" The old lady looked very mischievous, for she saw his anxiety in his face, and had the innate love of teasing peculiar to some women, and to all feline animals. "A very naughty robber, to come and steal my bright child away, without any consideration of the loss to me. Ah, ça; but I must be told everything en règle, you know."

She smoothed down the backs of her black silk mittens, and looked as serious as she could. She had attired herself for this interview as for one of the state occasions of her life, and it had been real relief to see both her children with Seton. The responsibility would have been too solemn to undertake alone.

Félicité was standing beside Seton, quite as eager as he was, and far more resolute.

A cloud came over the face of Madame Trudin whilst her daughter spoke.

"Ma mère, will you listen to me for five minutes alone?"

The puzzled old woman looked from one to the other. She hated difficulties. All had seemed so clear and easy, and now was Félicité going to put obstacles in the way?

But Seton could be as determined as Félicité when he was fairly roused.

"Pardon, Mademoiselle, I would not for the world intrude between you and your dear mother. I only ask one favour. That she will give me this dear little hand first, and accept me as her grandson?"

He drew Geneviève forward, but instead of standing hand in hand with him, she threw her arms round Madame Trudin's neck, and hid her face on her shoulder.

She only fled there for refuge and forgiveness, but the appeal was irresistible.

Her grandmother kissed her again and again, and whispered tender words of encouragement. Then she looked at Seton with a tearful earnestness that restrained even Félicité's impatience.

"Monsieur," she said, with a slight reproach in her tone, "I do not know how you have won the child's affections; but it seems to me you have them. It is not for me to withhold her from you, if you have, as you say you have, the means of making her your wife; but remember how she has been loved, and do not take her from me unless she is always to be as dear to you as she is now."

Seton was entirely moved out of his easy indolence. He took Madame Trudin's hand, and then Geneviève's, and pressed them to his lips. He turned to Félicité to claim her consent also; but Madlle. Trudin had gone in-doors.

Seton knew very well that all his delicious *têtes-à-tête* with Geneviève were over, and hard as it was to leave her, now that he could really feel she was his own, after a few explanations, and some very satisfactory talk with her grandmother, he returned to St. Roque. He felt a strange unwillingness to leave Félicité behind him, but he should come back next day to Dives, and surely Geneviève must be safe in her grandmother's loving care.

Meantime Félicité had shut herself up in her own room, not to give vent to the fury of jealous rage that laboured within her, but to devise how this folly, as she considered it, might best be stopped.

If Madame Trudin could be persuaded to retract her consent, she was not afraid that any girl, so well trained and principled as Geneviève, would commit the unpardonable sin of marrying against the consent of her parents; but the difficulty she saw before her lay in her mother's own inclination to permit the marriage.

She walked up and down the room for more than an hour, but still no valid objection presented itself. His double-dealing towards herself—bah! A bitter smile crossed her stern face. Her mother had no place left in her heart for her now! Had she not actually turned her back on her remonstrances, to listen to Seton?

Geneviève had robbed her of all. Geneviève—for whom she had worked so unflinchingly—who owed to her every charm and grace by which she had ensnared Seton! The fierce passion would not be stayed; it glittered in her eyes, and sounded in her hard, deep breathing.

"Oh, ciel!" she murmured. "How I hate her; if I were not a good woman, I should kill her."

This outburst brought back her self-control. She knew herself to be good, and pious, and wise; she ought not to allow her mother, whose faculties were clouded by age, to decide for herself in this matter.

These young marriages were never successful; could she forget her brother's sorrowful fate; had he not himself asked her in his last illness not to let his infant child die as her mother had died, broken-hearted. What did any of them know of this Mr. Seton; he might take the child away to England; who could say that he had not already a wife there?

She sate thinking on, till, as the rays of sunshine faded from off the vine-leaves clustering round her casement, a gleam of sudden light flashed within her; she shrank, with abhorrence and shame, from the suggestion, but she did not resolutely turn away and refuse to listen to it, and the suggestion had soon become a purpose, only waiting opportunity.

She had not joined the mid-day meal; but now that thought was no longer at work, she could feel hungry, and she went into the little *salle*.

Everything had smoothed itself to the success of her purpose ; Geneviève had gone to lie down, and Madame Trudin was alone.

She looked disturbed when her daughter came in ; but before their conference ended, there came upon her bright genial face an expression of sorrow and self-reproach which rarely left it again.

Madame Trudin was seated in the garden with her lap full of endive, and the great brass pan of water beside her. She had asked Mr. Seton to make his second déjeuner at Dives, and she ought to be getting the salad ready, but she made little progress ; her hands trembled so, that she was glad when Marie came and took it all away into the kitchen ; she had nothing now to distract her attention from unhappy Geneviève.

The poor girl had been weeping bitterly, but silently, for a long, long time, resisting all her grandmother's efforts at consolation. Now she sat up and pushed the hair away from her face.

"Bonne maman ! this is not your own thought, these are not your own words that you have been speaking—Aunt Félicité has put them all into your head. I do not love her, she has never loved me, and now she is trying to prevent my happiness."

"Hush, my child ; you are unjust. Have I, then, no judgment of my own ? All that I say is, that Mr. Seton is a heretic and a stranger. I am content not to make an obstacle of the first, though I am not sure that it is not a sin so to do ; but for the last I say this—he is handsome, and he is pleasing, and my Geneviève loves him. Bon, these are all good reasons for my having said yes to his pretensions."

"And you did say yes, grandmaman ; you cannot unsay that consent."

Madame Trudin looked conscience-struck, but she looked angry too.

"You are unreasonable, petite. I am not one to blow hot and cold. I say this : let Mr. Seton go away now and prove himself faithful for a year or so ; then if he comes back and claims you, there shall be no more obstacles ; but I think you have both been foolish and imprudent, and this little trial will be good for you."

It was difficult to believe that it was Madame Trudin who spoke, so much of her daughter's stiff, hard tone sounded in her words.

The young girl felt this, and felt too, how useless it was to appeal against them ; she clenched her hands tightly together, and sat silent.

Presently a new look of determination came into her sad face.

"Grandmamma, I have given my promise ; if Arthur claims me, I must marry him."

The old woman was surprised.

"Geneviève, you know what the law says about consent of parents—that of itself ought to be enough for any right-minded girl ; but have you so soon forgotten all I told you about your mother ? It is true, I did not at first see her fault so seriously as—as others did, because if she disobeyed and offended her high-born parents, it was to marry my

only son ; but the curse remained for all that. From the time of your father's marriage, nothing prospered with him ; and your mother's last words were to accuse herself of his misfortunes, and the blight she had brought on us all. Will you tempt her fate again, Geneviève ? Will you reward Mr. Seton's love by bringing down a curse on his head ?—for a curse must follow a disobedient child, though its parents may never utter it."

Geneviève had not forgotten the pitiful history, though she trembled now as her grandmother repeated it ; the remembrance of Elodie's sad pictures of her young father and mother dying of want and sorrow, before Mademoiselle Trudin came to the rescue of their child—too late to save the parents—had caused her bitter weeping. She knew she could not marry Seton unless her grandmother consented ; but she had not believed that Madame Trudin could resist her pleading.

Presently she saw Seton coming up the garden. Instead of going to meet him, she stole into the house.

He saw the movement, and a shadow came over his joyful anticipations ; a few minutes more, and he saw the old lady's sorrowful face ; then he grew anxious and impatient.

"But you must sit down ; I have a proposal to offer to you." She fidgeted her mittens as she spoke. "Yes, yes—you shall marry Geneviève—have I not said so yesterday ? But listen, my friend, the child is young ; you must wait two years."

He started up, and exclaimed against her words. But she went on doggedly.

"She is young ; and there are other reasons too—grave reasons, Monsieur, to a parent. You are a foreigner, Monsieur Seton—a heretic, perhaps"—she crossed herself ; "and you may change your mind. But listen ;" he was pacing the walk in front of her in a tempest of indignation ; "you shall have liberty to write to Geneviève ; you shall see her, provided that you respect les convenances, and that my daughter is present at your meetings ; for it is better for the child to go back at once to St. Roque."—She hurried on here, as if she were afraid he would not listen.—"At the end of two years, if you still wish to make Geneviève your wife, you shall have her ; but, Monsieur Seton, it is possible you will have changed before the end of two years."

Mr. Seton was very angry ; he stormed and reproached the old lady ; but he did not turn her from her resolution. Then he insisted on seeing Geneviève alone ; but this, it appeared, could not be tolerated.

"I must see her at all events, Madame," he said, savagely, "if I stay here till dark."

Madame bowed. She had a confused, downcast look, which puzzled the young Englishman. He wondered Félicité did not appear to support her mother.

"You shall, see the child, Monsieur : she is more reasonable than you are. I entreat you not to sow discord between her and me."

Geneviève came down stairs very pale and quiet : the great red rings round her eyes told him how deeply she had suffered, and yet he felt angry with her for the meek look of patience on her sad face.

He led her away to the window, and the soft-hearted grandmother plunged both her hands and as much of her face as possible into her huge knitting-basket, which stood on the little buffet near the door.

"Geneviève, my own darling, what is this that has come between us? It is not you who wish for this horrible separation?"

There was a look of uneasiness and doubt in his eyes that filled hers with a quick gush of tears.

"Ah! no, no," she said; "you have made life such a new, happy thing to me, that I dare not think what it will be when you go away."

Then she laid her face on his shoulder to hide her blushes.

He pressed her very closely to him, and bent down his head to whisper—

"You are your own mistress, my darling; you have no parents to obey; be my wife at once, and we will go to England together."

She loved him very dearly, and yet the proposal repelled her, apart from its actual meaning. It seemed as if she must have said or done something to make him think her unwomanly.

She shook her head, without answering.

"You do not love me; you cannot understand my love for you, Geneviève, or you could not think of idle scruples, when our whole future happiness is in question."

Geneviève looked up into his eyes; and Seton, angry and thwarted as he felt, could no longer doubt her love. By degrees she quieted him, and got him to listen to the story of her mother's disobedience.

"You are too pure and good for me," he whispered, when she ceased speaking, and Geneviève felt his tears on her forehead; but his mood soon altered: he knew Félicité had caused the change in her mother, and he was determined to acquaint her with his knowledge. But, face to face, he was no match for Félicité. He lost his patience, while she listened with perfect smiling calmness. She could be gentle both with him and Geneviève now; but she never took her eyes off them when they met in her presence.

They met twice a-week in the dingy little parlour in the Rue Puits d'Amour, and there sate Félicité, gentle, watchful, silent. How could they talk freely in her presence? Seton tried vainly to meet Geneviève by stealth, but her aunt never sent her out alone now: she was not unkind, but she was not to be taken unawares.

To be thus conquered and kept in subjection was too much.

"I cannot stand this," Seton whispered to Geneviève at his fourth visit. "Surely if you tried, you could meet me out of doors?"

"I cannot—indeed, I cannot. I am never alone now. I grieve most for you; for me, if I see you only, I am content; but I know you are unhappy."

He tried, for her sake, to bear the restraint, but he could not ; he had never had to study any one but himself, and the struggle was hard.

They met once more, and then he told Geneviève he should be better away from St. Roque.

"We can write to each other far more freely than we can speak, my darling," he whispered.

Seton went away ; he never dreamed of the anguish the brave little heart hid from him when he bade her good-bye.

Before he went, he told Madame Trudin that he did not wish Geneviève's professional education to be continued. "She sings quite well enough to please me," he said ; and the sight of her niece was now so painful to Félicité that she was glad to send her to Dives.

Seton had promised Geneviève to return at the year's end and claim her.

The time came, and found him pledged to spend some months in Italy with a brother-artist. It would be very provoking to go all the way to Normandy only to find the old grandmother so obstinate as ever ; but still he must keep his promise.

He wrote to Geneviève, and asked her to tell him frankly whether she could give him any definite hope of success if he came.

But Geneviève could not do this. She spoke to her grandmother, but Madame Trudin would not listen. The girl had lived on from month to month in the hope of seeing Seton ; his letters grew fewer and shorter as time went on ; "but when he comes all will be well," the poor child said to herself. And now what could she do ? Even for the joy of seeing him, she must not deceive him by a false hope, and once more she strove to be courageous and put a mask on her own deep, consuming love.

Women act thus from high, unselfish motives, and, doubtless, they are rewarded. Seton's letter showed Geneviève plainly that he shrank from coming to Normandy unless she could meet him as his wife. Ardently as she longed for his presence, her own love was too deep and fervent to need any spur, and it did not occur to her to doubt Seton's constancy ; circumstances might have delayed his writing. When he was in Italy he would have fewer distractions, and his letters would be again fond and passionate.

Her answer relieved Seton. It would have upset all his plans to make a *détour* to Normandy ; but he was mortified that Geneviève did not urge him to go to her ; it seemed to him that, after all, Madame Trudin had been right, and that they had both been young and precipitate. He put the tender, self-denying letter into his pocket, and began to think whether a long engagement was not a very foolish thing. He should not, at any rate, be in a hurry to write again to Geneviève. And then he went abroad, and month after month passed by, and still he did not answer the tender letter. It was partly forgetfulness, and partly a sort of shame, now that the sudden love-fit was over, for the

folly it had led him to commit. He had seen many lovely faces since he parted from Geneviève, faces ready to smile on him, and although he had not forgotten the sweet French girl, still her image had grown indistinct; its fresh charm had departed.

Arthur Seton was drawing in the Sciarra Palace one morning about six months after his arrival in Italy; he was in high spirits, triumphant at his own success, and the progress he was making in his profession; a sudden—

“Here you are at last, old fellow!” made him start and turn round.

A thin, dark man, with a face something between Don Quixote and Charles the First, was holding out his hand to him.

“I say, Seton, I’ve been hunting you up all the morning. Do come along into the sunshine. I’ve such lots of news for you. I called at your place before I came away, and I’ve brought you such a heap of letters.”

“Bills, perhaps, for I have not many correspondents.”

“Well, it’s all the same. I’m not sure that it isn’t easier to me to pay a bill than to answer a letter; in fact, it’s a thing I never do. If people will write to me, they must take the consequences.”

“But you see I have not a rich baronet for my uncle, so I prefer answering my letters. Where are you staying?”

“Oh, I’m at the Hotel di Rocco. I want you to tell me of a better place, and I want you to tell me lots of things when you’ve read your letters.”

Mr. Bladen would have done much better if he had asked his questions first. He installed Seton in a comfortable easy-chair, and then placed a little table before him, on which was a formidable-looking budget of letters.

One of them, bearing a foreign aspect and address, in a minute female handwriting, lay at the top of the packet. Seton glanced at it, and then, with a half-annoyed look, threw it on one side. He opened another; the contents seemed amusing, for he laughed with a heartiness unusual to him; then he looked at his companion. Mr. Bladen was at the window, at the further end of the balcony, intent on some scene in the street below.

Seton stretched out his hand, and opened and read the little letter.

It was very short, not quite a page long, but its effect on him was magical.

Still keeping it in his hand, he was beside his friend in an instant.

“Bladen, I am very sorry, but I must go. I must leave Rome to-night, if I can;” then he went on in a confused way about sudden news—illness—not a moment to lose; and before his friend had recovered from his surprise, was down-stairs, and halfway to his own lodgings.

Till he was safe on his way to Leghorn, he did not again read the

letter which had caused his sudden journey ; then he opened it, and read it slowly through :—

“MY OWN WELL-LOVED ARTHUR,—I wrote to you three months ago, but you have not answered me. It is possible, it seems to me, that my letter has never reached you. You asked me to tell you then whether grandmamma had changed her resolution about our marriage, and I fancied, perhaps without cause, that you did not care to come all this long way only to see Geneviève. It seemed to me you were braver than I, who had been so living on the hope of seeing you, and that I should be worthier of you if I could imitate your patience. Indeed, I have tried, my own Arthur, but they all say I am very ill. I think it is only the strong desire I have to see you ; perhaps, if you could come, I might grow well. Is it very weak, very selfish, to ask you to let me look at you once more, to let me hear you call me again your own—

“GENEVIEVE.”

In the flap of the envelope were just these words :—

“If you mean to see her again, come at once.—TRUDIN, MARIGNY VEUVE.”

It is useless to tell the feverish impatience that possessed Seton. At first, as he read and re-read the little letter, his tears fell over it, and self-reproach made him moody and irritable. The letter was dated three months back. What might not have happened in that time ? What a fool he had been, when he at length settled himself in Rome, to put off, day after day, writing home for his letters. But as he drew nearer Normandy, and, growing tired of his long, fatiguing journey, had leisure to reflect on the grievous interruption it must prove to his studies and success, he began to see that he had been hasty in acting on what he now called impulse. Geneviève was only a child—this pining might be a mere freak—women never died for love except in books—she might be well and strong again by this time—what did he know ?—she had, perhaps, forgotten him altogether. Though he said this to himself, he did not believe it. A silent, brooding discontent hung over him ; it would have been better to have written and inquired for Geneviève before he left Rome. He had determined to break off his engagement ; why had he exposed himself to what might prove an unpleasant meeting ?

He got to St. Roque early in the afternoon of a bright day in March. The keen east wind greeted him at the corner of the streets in its own ungenial fashion, but Seton did not heed it. He reached the market-place around the old gray church. It was silent and empty, but the memory of Geneviève, as she had stood there in her fresh pure loveliness, beside the old Elodie, came back to him, and those bright days of delight on the sands at Nourrenne ; and he had been ready to

fling away this treasure of love and beauty, and to go on his way contented not to see her again! How had he forgotten this brief delicious time? A sense of gladness stole over him. He was impatient to hold her to his heart, ready, even, to ask her forgiveness for his long neglect—a great concession, this last, from Arthur Seton.

The door of the dull house in the Puits d'Amour was opened by Félicité herself. Seton had no time to ask the question on his lips, for Madlle. Trudin had seized his hand, and held it between both of hers.

"Dieu merci! you are come!—it is of the mercy of the Holy Virgin to my pure, sainted child! But why have you not come before—why have you killed her with your delay?"

"Killed her!" Seton's face changed to such an awful whiteness that Félicité expected to see him fall at her feet; but he steadied himself against the wall of the narrow entrance-passage. "Is she very ill—let me see her at once," he said; "I must see her!"

There was a strange expression of mingled pity and contempt on Félicité's worn face, though her words had stunned him. Seton was struck with the haggard change; all colour and beauty had gone from her.

"You shall see her, Monsieur; but she is dearer to me than you are now, and I must prepare her for the sudden sight of you. Also, there is much to be told you; and perhaps you ought to know it before you meet. Was it my letter that made you come?" she said, abruptly.

"Your letter? No. She wrote to me."

"Geneviève! Oh! but that was months ago. Ah! if you had come then! Now it is too late—too late for all but repentance." She buried her face in her hands, and sobbed—hard, suppressed sobs, that brought no tears with them.

Seton was agitated and alarmed, but he could not take in the reality. Again he moved to go up-stairs.

"Wait!" Félicité placed herself between him and the door of the little room. "You have caused others suffering enough by waiting for your slow coming; can you not even make the atonement of a little patience, while I tell you what must be told you about her, who is too pure, too near heaven, for either of *us* to look at?"

Her first words had been bitter, but as she spoke of Geneviève her voice changed into a despairing sadness, that brought tears to Seton's eyes.

"Heaven knows, I have no right to reproach you, Monsieur; you have sinned, but not as I have. You did not sit down and plan deliberately how best to destroy Geneviève's happiness, just because it clashed with your own vanity. I did! Listen!" (for she saw his attention was wandering, in his eagerness to go up-stairs.) "I loved you, as only vehement natures can love, and I believed that you were throwing yourself away on Geneviève. I did all I could to keep her from you; and when I found this useless, then I resolved that your marriage should

never be. I thought Geneviève had no depth of feeling—God forgive me! I judged that she would forget long before you would.”

Seton groaned.

“My only hope lay in making my mother insist on a long engagement. Even now I tell you, I am so little humbled that I scarcely believe in my own wickedness. I tried many ways; but my mother would not listen. Then I said, ‘I have worked and slaved all my life, and been always a sacrifice to others. Look at me, my mother! You know I always keep my word. I am resolved that this Englishman shall not marry the child, and if you persist in thwarting me, you must live on the small income you have; I can work no longer for you, and I will not!’ Monsieur, I knew my mother when I said this. She is good; but she loves herself too, and all the little comforts of her life are more to her than life itself. She cried, and strove hard to change my purpose; but I saw I should conquer if I persisted, and I did persist. You know what came after, and how I tried to make even your meetings a penance. You went away sooner than I expected. I have learned to set men’s natures at a lower rate since I knew you. Perhaps you thought, as I did, that Geneviève was so calm when you left her, that she did not feel much sorrow. How little we knew, either of us—we, who only thought of ourselves—of her who lived but for another. I watched her all that year. She grew paler and thinner daily, with a restless, feverish look in her bright eyes, but she did not droop actually till the year’s end; then she faded so fast that I knew what the struggle had been before. One day, Monsieur, the doctor told me she would die if her mind were not set at rest; that she was pining to death. In one moment, my heart told me that, if she died, I had killed her. I went to her, on my knees I told her all—my love and my sin—and she—she forgave me, without even one murmur. I asked her to write to you—and she wrote—though she said it was selfish to recall you against your will; but since the time when she could have had an answer to that last letter, she has sunk rapidly. You shrink from me, Monsieur Seton. I am not surprised. I have told you of my shame, as part of the punishment I must bear. You have sinned, too; but if it had not been for me, you would not have had the occasion. Now follow me, but do not come in till I summon you.”

The pale, overwrought woman, led the way up-stairs with the quiet, self-possessed manner he so well remembered. He could not think or feel; only the past filled his mental vision with mocking pictures of what might never be again.

“Come in, now, Monsieur,” said Félicité, from the inner room. Seton had been burning with impatience; now he hung back—he dared not face the dying girl.

But he heard his name softly spoken, and almost unconsciously he found himself beside her.

She lay on a sofa, changed far beyond any change he could have pictured. Lovely still, but with a beauty that seemed more of heaven than earth.

She smiled when she saw him, but her face grew troubled soon. He threw himself down beside her, and burst into an agony of grief, terrible to any beholder; enough—so it seemed to Madame Trudin—to kill her cherished darling.

"Hush!—hush, Monsieur! if you have so little control, you must leave us."

He had not seen the grand-mère at first, for she sat hidden behind Geneviève's sofa. Her voice checked him; but he could not altogether restrain himself.

"Ma tante!"—the loving trust in the sweet eyes seemed more than Félicité could bear, judging by her bowed head and trembling hands. "Thou wilt take bonne-maman away, wilt thou not? It is so long since Arthur and I have seen each other."

No one spoke in answer; but when he raised his head they were alone.

He had never practised self-control, and he could not learn it all at once. Kneeling beside her, holding her clasped in his arms, he poured out all his agony, all his self-reproach, in miserable broken sentences, mingled with sobs. More than once she tried to stop him, to soothe him with gentle, loving words; but he could not listen. Her wasted hand, as she laid it on his, only roused his grief to more intense bitterness. Her sudden pallor and half-closed eyelids warned him at last. In terror he called to Félicité to aid his efforts to restore her.

"Leave us now," he said, as Geneviève revived again. "I promise you to be careful." He made a mighty effort to stifle his sobs. He longed to hear her speak to him.

"You must not grieve so vehemently, dearest!" He had clasped his hand in both of hers, and now she drew it to her lips—"I am so happy in the joy of your presence, that it is hard to make me see that you do not rejoice in mine also."

He could not speak, but he clasped his arms yet more fondly round her.

"Arthur, my own darling, you must not sorrow over any of the past. I like you to know, and yet I cannot half tell you, how blessed it has all been to me. It has taught me so many things. I love you, oh, so much better than I should have loved you without it, and grand-mamma, and poor—poor Aunt Félicité. You must not sorrow over what has made me glad, my own." For he had buried his face on the cushion on which she lay, and she felt his tears on her cheek.

It was very hard to feel that he must smile into those dear eyes whose light would so soon leave him; that he must restrain the quivering agony of self-reproach, instead of pouring it out to her. But it

seemed to Seton as if he must obey her—as if the only atonement left for him was to submit himself implicitly to her slightest wish. . . .

What agony he suffered, day after day, as she faded gradually from earth, only those can realize who have watched beside such a parting spirit as Geneviève's. He bled inwardly, as daily some fibre of hope was wrenched away, and yet he did not dare to trouble, by earthly sorrow, the soul yearning for flight.

But it was only her presence that could thus subdue him. Often he left her room abruptly, and Félicité would find him stretched on the floor of the room below in an awfulness of despair that even she dared not cope with. Then she would send her mother, to soothe him like a child, and bring him back to Geneviève.

It was to Seton his hardest punishment that she never expressed a wish to live for him. One day, moved out of the restraint he had learned beside her, he told her this.

"And it is just and right, my darling. I could never have made you happy; and you feel this—"

Such a look of loving wonder came into her face.

"My Arthur, you would have made me so happy that I should have loved earth more than heaven. Think how happy you make me now." . . .

And so she faded, with little of suffering, and to the last smiling in the three faces that strove to hide their anguish from her. . . .

And when all was ended, Seton went away.

It seems to him as if he has left years of life behind him at St. Roque. I cannot tell if the impression will be lasting. Will he go back into the world and forget, and grow as light-hearted as ever? or will he, like gray-haired, sorrow-stricken Aunt Félicité, carry for ever with him the memory of his grief, and the share he had in bringing it to pass?

Félicité still lives in the dull house in the Rue Puits d'Amour. She works harder than ever at her profession. But old Madame Trudini says, each time her daughter comes to Dives, that she grows more gentle and loving—more like her lost Geneviève.

KATHARINE S. MACQUOID.



ON SOME NOTABLE DREAMS.

WHETHER we regard dreams as "the children of an idle brain, begot of nothing but vain fantasy," or accept them as an important integral part of the human constitution, they offer an interesting field of inquiry. Simply as stray shadows, flitting across the half-sleeping mind, they present an incongruous variety of peculiar incidents—tragic, pathetic, wonderful, ludicrous. Accepted as revelations of a higher state, lost or to come, regarded as the work of certain delicate machinery planted in the human brain by the Divine hand, they assume peculiar importance in many authenticated cases of dreams fulfilled. In sleep, with the muscles relaxed, the senses at rest, thought and voluntary motion in repose, the work of the organic functions goes on, the blood circulates, is purified by respiration, and, for the time being, (as Dr. Symonds puts it in an excellent little work, to which we are indebted for some of our instances of notable dreams in this paper) the body lives the life of a vegetable. But there are varied degrees of sleep. Some of our senses may be comparatively wakeful whilst others are in sound repose. In this state one organ may receive impressions that will excite activity of association in others more or less wakeful. It is this incomplete state of sleep, this semi-repose of the faculties, which produces dreams. Dr. Macnish, "happening to sleep in damp sheets, dreamed he was dragged through a stream." Dr. Symonds witnessed in his sleep what he thought was a prolonged storm of thunder, which he was afterwards able to trace to the light of a candle brought suddenly into the dark room where he had fallen asleep. He relates that a person having a blister applied to his head fancied he was scalped by a party of Indians. I remember, when a boy, sleeping in a strange house, in an old-fashioned room, with an oaken store-cupboard over the bed. I dreamt that I was being murdered; the assassin struck me on the head, and I awoke with a sense of pain in that region. Putting my hand to my forehead, I found it sticky—with blood! I felt almost too ill to cry for help, but at length I alarmed the household, and, on procuring a light, it was discovered that some fermented jam had leaked through the bottom of the cupboard and fallen upon my head in a small sluggish stream. A few months ago, shortly before going to bed, a friend had been discussing with me the peculiar instincts of animals, and, more particularly, their sense of the coming on of storms. After this he dreamed he was a Worcestershire short-horn, grazing in a pleasant meadow on the Hereford-

shire side of the Malvern Hills. He had a number of companions. Signs of a storm appeared in the sky, a misty vapour hung on the well-known beacon. He remembered distinctly, although he was a cow, watching, with a sense of great delight, the beauty of the preliminary tokens of the storm. With the other cows, he quietly strolled towards the shelter of an adjacent tree, and waited until the storm should break. He was chewing the cud, and he relished its herbaceous flavour. He distinctly remembered wagging his tail; yet all the time he had full reasoning faculties, and a lively sense of the beauties of the scenery. Dr. Macnish says, once his dreaming travelled so far into the regions of absurdity that he conceived himself to be riding upon his own back; one of the resemblances being mounted on another and both animated with a soul appertaining to himself, in such a manner that he knew not whether he was the carrier or the carried. These are odd examples of the incongruity of "the imperfection of the dreaming memory," which is most strongly illustrated when we dream of those who are dead. "We believe them still to be living, simply because we have forgotten that they are dead." A friend of Dr. Symonds dreamed that he was dead, and that he carried his own body in a coach to bury it. When he reached the place of burial a stranger said, "I would not advise you, sir, to bury your body in this place, for they are about to build so near it that I have no doubt the body will be disturbed by the builders." "That," replied the dreamer, "is very true; I thank you for the information, and I will remove it to another spot," upon which he awoke.

Of the prophetic character of dreams there are many strangely startling examples. Pepys relates the story "which Luellin did tell me the other day, of his wife upon her deathbed; how she dreamed of her uncle Scobell, and did foretell from some discourse she had with him that she should die four days thence, and no sooner, and did all along say so, and did so." In "Some Passages of the Life and Death of the Right Honourable John, Earl of Rochester, written by his own direction on his deathbed" (1680), his lordship related how Lady Ware's chaplain dreamed he should die the next day, went to bed in apparent perfect health, and died in the morning. In some "Various Examples" given by Mr. Frank Seafield in his excellent work on "The Literature and Curiosities of Dreams," it is related that, "My Lady Seymour dreamed that she saw a nest with nine finches in it. And so many children she had by the Earl of Winchelsea, whose name was Finch." "Anno 1690, one in Ireland dreamed of a brother, or near relation of his, who lived at Amesbury, in Wiltshire, that he saw him riding on the downs, and that two thieves robbed him and murdered him. The dream awakened him; he fell asleep again, and had the like dream. He wrote to his relation on account of it, and described the thieves' complexion, stature, and clothes, and advised him to take care of himself. Not long after he had received the monitory letter he rode towards

Salisbury, and was robbed and murdered : and the murderers were discovered by his letter and executed." In 1698, Mr. William Smythies, curate of St. Giles's, Cripplegate, published an account of the robbery and murder of John Stockden, victualler, in Grub-street, and the discovery of the murderers, by several dreams of Elizabeth, the wife of Thomas Greenwood, a neighbour of the murdered man's. Jung Stilling, in "*Theorie der Geister-Kunde*," relates, that a short time before the Princess Nagotsky, of Warsaw, travelled to Paris (October 1720), she dreamed that she found herself in a strange apartment, where a man presented a cup to her, and desired her to drink. She declined, and the unknown person said, "You should not refuse ; this is the last you will ever drink in your life." In Paris she was taken ill, and the King's physician was sent to her. On his arrival, the Princess showed great signs of astonishment ; asked the reason, she said, "You perfectly resemble the man whom I saw in a dream at Warsaw ; but I shall not die this time, for this is not the same apartment which I saw in my dream." She recovered, and eventually, in good health, forgot her dream and the fears it had created. Upwards of a year afterwards, however, she was dissatisfied with her lodgings at the hotel, and requested to have apartments prepared for her in a convent at Paris. Immediately on entering the room, she exclaimed, "It is all over with me. I shall not leave this room alive ; it is the one I saw in my dream at Warsaw." She died soon afterwards, in the same apartment, of an ulcer in the throat, occasioned by the drawing of a tooth. In the "*Gentleman's Magazine*" for December, 1787, there is a wonderful account of the discovery of a murder through a dream. The narrative called forth a note from A. J., who said that some few years before the erection of those well-known lighthouses called the Caskets, near that island, an islander dreamed that a ship had been wrecked, and that some part of the crew had saved themselves upon the rocks. He told this story the next morning on the quay ; but the sailors, despite their superstitious characteristics, treated it as an idle dream. The next night he dreamed the same thing, and prevailing upon a companion to go out with him the next morning to the spot in a boat, they found three poor wretches there, and brought them ashore. Dr. Abercrombie says he is enabled to give the following anecdote as entirely authentic :—A lady dreamed that an aged female relative had been murdered by a black servant, and the dream occurred more than once. She was then so strangely impressed by it that she went to the house of the lady to whom it related, and prevailed upon a gentleman to watch in an adjoining room the following night. About three o'clock in the morning, the gentleman, hearing footsteps on the stairs, left his place of concealment, and met the servant carrying up a quantity of coals. Being questioned as to where he was going, he replied, in a confused manner, that he was going to mend his mistress's fire, which, at three o'clock in the morning,

in the middle of summer, was evidently impossible ; and, on further investigation, a strong knife was found concealed beneath the coals. "Another lady," he says, "dreamed that a boy, her nephew, had been drowned along with some young companions with whom he had been engaged to go on a sailing excursion in the Firth of Forth. She sent for him in the morning, and prevailed on him to give up his engagement. His companions went, and were all drowned." The alarm with regard to the disappearance of Maria Martin was brought to its height by the mother dreaming, three successive nights, that her daughter had been murdered, and buried in the Red Barn. Upon this, search was made, the floor taken up, and the murdered body discovered. The story is fully related in "Chambers's Journal" for October, 1832. In a note to Dr. Binns's "Anatomy of Sleep," Lord Stanhope is credited with relating that a Lord of the Admiralty, who was on a visit to Mount Edgcombe, dreamed that, walking on the sea-shore, he picked up a book which appeared to be the log-book of a ship of war of which his brother was the captain. He opened it, and read an entry of the latitude, longitude, as well as the day and hour, to which was added, "Our captain died." The company endeavoured to comfort him by laying a wager that the dream would be falsified, and a memorandum was made in writing of what he had stated, which was afterwards confirmed in every particular. J. Noel Paton relates the extraordinary fulfilment of a dream of his mother's involving the death of a dearly beloved sister. The murder of Mr. Perceval, which was seen in a vision more than one hundred and fifty miles from the spot where it occurred, is a well-known story, and authentic. A lady friend of mine vouches for the truth of the following story :—"My mother resided in London, and one of her children was sent out to nurse. She dreamed soon after that she went to the nurse's house, and saw her own child, looking half-starved, and faintly struggling for a crust of bread which the nurse's child was eating. The children were both in one cradle. My mother went the very next day, and found the children exactly as she saw them, her own child weak, ill, and hungry." Of a member of my own family, it is related that he added, with some difficulty, two keys to a musical wind-instrument. He had prepared the drawings, and the new instrument was about to be manufactured, when he dreamed that a military band passed through the city where he resided, the leader of which used an instrument with the very additional keys that he had invented. The next day a regiment *en route* for London did pass through the town, and the leader was playing upon such an instrument, the first manufacture of a firm which had just brought out the new bugle.

Mr. John Hill Benton, in his work "Narratives from Criminal Trials in Scotland" (1852), urges that no ghost-story, or story of dream-coincidences, could stand the sifting examination of a court of justice. Dr. Symonds evidently entertains a similar opinion, though he

gives us what would seem some startling evidence leading to a contrary conviction. Before any such cases are received as true occurrences, he very properly asks that they shall undergo most rigorously all the tests of evidence. Regarding them as instances of a kind of revelation, he says :—"We look for a final cause ; but we discern none, unless it be the possibility of some influence on the spiritual condition of the individuals." "Aye, there's the rub." A writer in "Blackwood" puts the question, but does not answer it : "Are appearances in dreams, imaginary visions ; or are they, however inexplicable the mode, the actual spirit-presence of the person whose images they bear?" It is not my intention to discuss this point, which may be left to the philosophers, medical and scientific. My purpose is simply to compile for the reader a few notable instances of dreaming, curious as records of "dream-life," and suggestive for thoughtful inquiry.

Whether, by some extraordinary action of the spiritual essence, warnings of disaster or prophetic monition may be communicated to the brain through the mystic medium of a dream ; or whether our fancies of the night are the mere mixed associations of time and place and memory wrought into apparent reasonable shape by accidental circumstances ; these are questions that may hardly be fully answered. It cannot be doubted that God permitted this exercise of the faculties when in a semi-state of rest for our benefit in some way ; and, whatever may be said to the contrary, the evidence in favour of the extraordinary fulfilment of dreams, altogether beyond human explanation, is too strong for disbelief. May it be that an All-wise, All-powerful Being still deigns to influence occurrences by this means, and more especially in the bringing of great criminals to earthly justice ; for "murder, though it have no tongue will speak with most miraculous organ?" That dreams are to be catalogued and interpreted as the believers in *Oncirocriticon* set forth is simply nonsense ; but they often serve important ends, and seeing how great a portion of our lives is occupied with sleep, to dream is to fill up a great blank with sensations of pleasure, hope, joy, that last often long after the dream is over, tending to an elevation of the aspirations and ambition of the dreamer. There are mathematicians who have solved great problems in dreams. Franklin frequently formed correct opinions of important matters in dreams ; the mind has been inspired with beautiful poems in sleep, Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" for example, though this may, perhaps, hardly be spoken of in the sense of what are called ordinary healthy dreams, seeing that it may probably have been greatly influenced by opium. And now—

"To all, to each, a fair good-night,
And pleasing dreams, and slumbers light."

JOSEPH HATTON.

PATTY'S MISTAKE.

YOU would never have dreamed it, never in the world ; but my sister Patty was really one of the most impulsive persons I have ever met ! She was always plunging headlong into some scheme that seized upon her fancy, or into which some designing person, knowing her weakness, had inveigled her. Itinerant impostors with eyeless needles, pins as pointless as the jokes of a would-be wit, shoe-laces from which the tags departed upon the first trial—all these seemed to land at our door and victimize Patty.

You will perhaps smile as you read this ; so may I ; but true tears shine in my eyes as well. I glance at this sister of mine as she sits with the firelight glinting on her busy needle, darning with consummate patience the most trying orifices in the stockings of the writer. Who but she could make those gaping holes neat and presentable ? You would hardly imagine, from her face, what sort of a person she might be ; for the lines are very clear and quiet, the eyes tender, gray, the whole expression that of peace rather than repose—the peace that “passeth all understanding.” But then the mouth ? If you would read character with any degree of accuracy, always observe the mouth. My sister's is as sensitive as that of a child—just as eager, just as credulous as full of faith. But never, never around any child's mouth is such an expression of pathos, of yearning. Ah ! never such a record of deep suffering patiently borne as stands written in lines of untold loveliness about the sweet mouth of this, my elder sister.

You will understand, then, why it was that the little urchins in the street asked her for “pennies,” and put out their hands, frosty, red as winter apples with the cold, sure that the penny would be forthcoming. You will understand why it was that people who were sick or in trouble always sent for Patty.

She knew as well as any body that people imposed upon her ; but then, she liked them none the worse for it : the main idea that animated her life was that of “helping other people along.” Let her help you in some way, and she was the obliged party, and felt grateful to you for the privilege. Perhaps there had been a time when her life had held other hopes beside these ; a beautiful season, when it was early Spring-time with her heart, when the birds sang, and the violets bloomed in sunlight. The birds had stopped their singing, maybe, and if the violets bloomed, one guessed it was above a grave ; but since she said nothing

of all this, neither shall I, except as I must tell the story of what befel us in our quiet home.

It was a very quiet home, in a little country town, where we had always lived. Our house was a rambling, old-fashioned affair, built by my father years ago. There had been plenty of birdlings in the nest, but they were all gone now, only Patty and myself left. So we lived in the old rookery still; poor as church mice we were, but we contrived to be happy after a fashion of our own. We made roaring fires in the old-fashioned grates, but what became of the heat it was hard to say; I suppose it all went up the chimney, just where it wasn't wanted. So Patty and I wrapped shawls around ourselves, and made light of the matter. The doors, too, wanted to be re-hung of a cold winter's day; how the draughts came in, biting one's feet! and if it snowed, what white flakes would drift in through the cracks, and lodge in the great, barn-like entries! Well, well; this was all very healthy, laughed we; plenty of fresh air, at all events.

This philosophy answered the purpose until one afternoon—I shan't say one *unlucky* afternoon, because that's a bad expression, and, besides, the sequel proved otherwise. One afternoon, then, I let Patty proceed alone to the one scene of dissipation in which we permitted ourselves to indulge—viz., that useful branch of festivity known as the "Dorcas Meeting." I saw her depart with misgivings; it was an uncommon thing for us to be separated at any time, especially on these occasions; but how could I help myself? Marian, our plump little maid-of-all-work—a misnomer in this instance, as Patty and myself did all the work worth speaking of—had been sent for—wanted at home. There were various odds and ends to be attended to, so, as I was the youngest, I got the reticule, put in thimble, scissors, &c.—I always attended to these small items—and despatched Patty to the field of action. If I had dreamed for a moment what the result would be!

Patty came home from the meeting a trifle earlier than usual, and with her bonnet edged a little bit to one side, as if it had been put on in a fit of desperation; just as a man, under similar circumstances, claps his hat close down over his eyes.

"Elizabeth, I've done it!" was her exclamation as she entered.

"Done what, Patty?"

"I expect you'll be amazed."

"Patty, you haven't gone and invited that Dorcas Society to meet here? I can't—I won't believe that!"

"Elizabeth, that's exactly what I have done; and now, all that's left to us, is to make the best of it."

I was simply confounded. For a space silence reigned; then I opened a solemn battery, as follows:—

"Patty, have you considered that we want a new stair-carpet, that we haven't chairs enough, or plates enough, or cups enough? Have

you considered that the back-room upstairs hasn't any carpet at all on it, good, bad, or indifferent?"

"I've been expecting all the time we should have been able to buy one," interpolated my victim.

"All very well, Patty; but the time hasn't come yet when we have have had any money to spare, and I don't know when it will! Have you considered that we live in an old barn of a house, with fires that won't warm it, that we've got no rugs in the parlours, and nothing as it ought to be?"

"The parlour-carpets are very pretty, though, Elizabeth," said my poor sister, in a voice that quivered.

"But while you were about it, why did you pick out the coldest weather? and why did you select our house after that of Mrs. Rawlins, who is rich, who is splendid, who has every comfort and luxury?" ended I, jumbling everything together, as women will when they wish to be especially aggravating.

I say I "ended" thus. For the truth was, that as I regarded my sister, I beheld large round tears, betokening extreme distress, falling down her cheeks.

I made a rush then, threw my arms around her neck, and exclaimed, "Patty, stop crying, and I'll not say a word more. Just tell me how it came about."

"There was no other place for it—I mean the Society—to meet. And I—and I thought they all looked at me, and in a moment of desperation I said we'd have it, and they all took it up at once."

"Of course, curiosity," I muttered.

Then I grew desperate, too, and said defiantly—"Well, let them come!" as if the members of the said meeting, one and all, were a set of vampires, or ghouls, or dreadful savages of one sort or another.

Then, Patty and I sat down and talked the matter over as to the hows and wherefores, so that we might not be disgraced and put to open shame.

Should we set a regular tea-table, or should we pass the tea round? The latter carried the day. It was an innovation, to be sure, for the time-honoured custom was, at a given signal from the lady of the house, to proceed in solemn state down stairs to a table set forth with frigid splendour, in its "company" silver, china, &c., which we surrounded in silence—a feminine conclave, without one masculine present to stimulate conversation, or give zest to the meal; in my heart, I always sympathize with a man when he declares that he abhors "tea-parties."

This point settled, another difficulty dawned upon us. "Elizabeth, we have no silver."

I stared at Patty, then said, with some degree of bitterness—"You're to blame for that, you know; you would sell the silver—our mother's silver—to pay our father's debts."

"I know it. I had no choice. We are poor enough, but then we are honest. We owe no human creature a farthing—always remember that, Elizabeth."

"Patty, I never could find out who bought that silver."

A grave look came into my sister's eyes, a very gentle flush into her cheek; I knew what she was thinking of when she looked so; or, rather, I always had known heretofore, but I was puzzled now.

"I have sometimes thought," said she, with a quiver in her voice, "that perhaps somebody we knew had purchased it, and that some time or another I should have money enough to buy it back."

"Dear me, that's just like you!" sighed I.

Poor dear Patty! she was always having visions of this kind. She had keen æsthetic tastes, loved the beautiful so dearly. She was all the time illuminating our poverty with the thought of some golden period that should presently arrive, when all her pet ideas could be carried out, and our home made the earthly paradise she would have it become. What beautiful flowers she would have, what charming knicknacks, such as all women love. Oh, it was as good as a novel to listen to her dreamings! No child over a fairy-book ever pictured such delights as Patty. For to us all these things seemed wildly beautiful, because beyond our reach—we could hardly realize that to many people they were every-day matters, nothing heeded, nothing thought of, never worth a moment of thanksgiving to Him who had created this love for the beautiful in the soul made after His own image!

The next day was Sunday. I watched Patty in church, and could see that, notwithstanding the time and place, the Dorcas Meeting was the uppermost thought in her mind. I knew, by the wrinkles in her forehead, the exact calculations she was making, and as she glanced over at the Rawlins's pew, I knew she was devoutly hoping that the portly figure of Mrs. Rawlins would be absent from the next meeting. For we poor folk all dreaded the splendid Mrs. Rawlins, and wished to steer clear of her, as little minnows try to keep out of the way of the larger fish. Dear me! this magnificent lady might despatch poor little us at a mouthful—her splendour engulfed everything as in a maelstrom.

The next day we sat in our back-parlour, striving to be very cheerful; but I think we both felt as if our hearts were freighted with lead, instead of the lively currents that were wont to ebb back and forth.

Patty had just said, "Never mind, Elizabeth, it's always darkest just before day," when the door-bell chirped after a comical fashion it had of its own, and Marian let in the sweetest girl in all the town—Alice Starbright.

The face carried out the name. Surely no star ever gleamed more sweetly upon any wanderer, leading him towards rest and comfort, than did this of Allie's, always smiling, always tender, bright. Aye, even now, though she wore garments of deep mourning. She had lost her father

only a month ago, yet for all that the shadow of her grief was suffered to rest upon no other heart—the cross had been sent to her alone, and she bore it with a gentle bravery most beautiful to see.

Patty kissed the lovely girl-face first on one cheek, then on the other, then gave way to me with that light flush on her cheek, and that intent look in her eyes, that Allie's coming always brought to her countenance. Allie's father had once upon a time been my Sister Patty's lover; and with her to love once was to love always.

"So you're going to have the Dorcas Meeting here?" was Allie's first greeting.

"Yes," we answered, striving to look cheerful with all our might.

"I heard of it last week," continued Allie, laughing.

"Of course," grumbled I; "everything of that kind travels fast—bad news especially."

Allie laughed again. It wasn't like her to be unsympathetic, but she seemed delighted with that soft, sweet delight she always showed when she was going to make somebody happy.

"Let's see. It's to meet to-morrow afternoon. Cake all made?"

"Yes, indeed," said Patty, with that bright, tender glow on her face she always wore for Allie.

Then she must needs bring a plate of cakes for Allie to taste—crisp, home-made biscuits, such as only Patty could make; crumpets, delicate brown, melting in one's mouth; and frosted sponge-cake.

"These are all fit for a queen," said Allie, tasting, with gusto.

"Yes," cogitated Patty, "the cake will answer, if the rest only matched."

"I've got a favour to ask," said Allie, growing grave all at once. "You're not either of you used to Dorcas Meetings. Now I know just the *modus operandi*. Aunt Mary is ill, and wants to see you both ever so much. Now you go there in the morning, and don't get back here until the afternoon, just about dusk, say; the people do not come before then, and if I don't have everything in beautiful order my name's not Alice Starbright!"

At first we declared this to be impossible; but Allie coaxed, and then Patty gave in. I followed suit, for I began to see there was something beneath it all. When she had attained her object, Allie ran away, but I noticed before she went that she nestled close up to Patty and kissed her many, many times.

The next morning found us on our way to Aunt Mary's. Patty, who was never more at home than when she was going to a sick-room, carried a little brown basket on her arm. How many pilgrimages that little brown basket made in the course of the year! and what comfort it always held for invalids!

The day slipped away, Patty as busy as a bee, setting things to rights, and making Aunt Mary comfortable in every direction, until the sha-

dows began to fall and grow deeper. Then we trudged home again, in a queer mood both of us.

What a sweet face it was that met us at the door—that led us in—and to such a transformation! Wonder of wonders! what did it all mean? In the old-fashioned grates, leaping, dancing fires cracked and sparkled, and before them glowed crimson rugs of softest velvet. In the windows swung moss baskets of trailing creepers and bright-hued blossoms. On the oaken sideboard gleamed, most wonderful of all, our mother's silver!

Patty knew it at once. She ran to it, she kissed each separate piece and gave it a little hug of delight. Then I knew how much it had cost her to part with it, how proud and pure the honour that would let no stain be left upon our father's memory.

Allie drew us to the fire, and, one hand in each of ours, said:—

"Dear friends, you will not refuse me the comfort of pleasing you? How dear you both are, I cannot tell; how dear one of you must ever be to me, I can only show in deeds. Before my father died, he told me the story. How dear Patty had been to him; how she was to have been my mother. I think he loved her through all these years. He told me, too, that he had bought the silver, but dared not offer 'it in his lifetime; he knew Patty too well for that; when he was dead and gone, she would take it from his daughter and keep it for the father's sake."

By this time Allie and I were both crying. Patty shed no tears, but smiled softly, sweetly, brightly, as the angels may, then held out her arms to Allie Starbright. Allie nestled in them. She had lost her mother years ago, and now that her father had gone, there was no room for empty gossip—Patty could be her mother in very deed and truth.

Perhaps you may ask why Patty and Joseph Starbright, Allie's father, had never got married. I cannot tell you; it seems to me that hearts that are dearest in this world are for ever held apart. God help us all! how we drift away from those we prize the fondest. Hush! there is no loss even here. Remember, we are only children, the best of us, and what we would soil or mar, God puts out of reach for the present. Trustful hearts, we shall have it all back again by-and-by.

The meeting came and enjoyed itself wonderfully, and stayed later than it had ever stayed at anybody's before. The fires warmed the sitting-rooms, the young people played their old-fashioned games with the best grace imaginable, and the dreaded Mrs. Rawlins stayed at home.

So, after all the worriment, the cogitations, the tears, the end of Patty's Mistake was unmitigated delight. From henceforward I never mean to worry any more. It's wicked, and a waste of time besides. For there's a best to every worst, and where the shadows fall the thickest, it's a sure sign that there the light is brightest!

OUR LOG-BOOK.

"SHAKESPERE'S pre-eminent genius," said a German friend once to the writer, "seems to consist in the absolute freedom he allows to each character in self-development. There is no pause, no hurry, none of that abruptness or bluntness of dialogue which marks artistic impatience and imperfect sympathy; he is impartial to all and sundry, great and small; gives free scope and vantage to every one; each intelligence, however wayward or wicked, gradually forming itself in beautiful consistence with the 'rounded whole' of law and providence in which, all unconsciously, it is most intimately and necessarily involved." As a salient instance of this, the German referred to Lady Macbeth. That character—one of the subtlest and least simple of all Shakespere's creations—had been to some extent misunderstood, he said, simply owing to the tendency of the common mind to read men through arbitrary impressions and dislikes, founded on undue prominence given to separate traits and actions. He maintained that there was a great deal to be said for Lady Macbeth; and he was certain that Shakespere, through her and her helpless pitiful remorse (which the drama on the very surface signified as the cause of her death), meant to give testimony to all time that the worst woman might have some good in her. And had the great dramatist foreseen what English fiction was to come to in our day, one could almost believe that he meant her to be a perpetual protest against the tendency of the two great schools of English fiction—the sensationalists and the cynical moralists or followers of Thackeray. So said the German; but on being met with Mr. Carlyle's rather extravagant statement, that the worst man must also have some good in him at bottom else life were not endurable, and that he must have some ground of justifying himself to himself were it only as an escape from suicide, our German shook his head, and went off into a very philosophical analysis of Macbeth's character and villainy, which, however, our readers may well be spared.

Our purpose in referring to Shakespere here is this, that we may not speak quite wide of the mark when we say, that in nothing does lack of creative sympathy show itself more than in hurry, and broken, irruptive movement of dialogue. We could name one lady-novelist whose works bear evidence of great analytical power and of uncommon constructive talent, who yet, almost out of self-will and a certain unsocial habit, expresses a kind of egotistic impatience, and even contempt for common people and their little foibles, whenever she essays dialogue, from which noticeably she always escapes when she can. Thackeray, in one respect, certainly did Englishmen a poor ser-

vice, when he tried to establish a sameness of human character and motive by attention to foibles and littlenesses alone; for necessarily he inspired scepticism as to that mysterious ground of sympathy and emotion from which all separate traits take their colour and significance, as interpretative of character. The work of teaching men the human heart without regard to any ground of lofty possibility—that is, without any reference whatever to an ideal—has by one very thoughtful writer been designated strongheadedly as devil's work; and though we are very far from applying any such words to Thackeray's productions, yet faithful criticism may be justified in declaring, that Thackeray's greatest defect is, that by his abnegation of an ideal, he is compelled through all his characters only to report himself. In one word, he is concerned only with that in a character which can be *observed* as badness; and passes over that which can only be felt and imaginatively realized as goodness. Thackeray's elaborate patience is thus very much the patience of the scientific man, and not the impartiality of the artist. The words he puts into Becky Sharp's mouth, as we have already said in these pages, really embody Thackeray's opinions, and, as such, may have a certain value and a certain truth; but people—especially wicked people—are not so ready to confess against themselves as some clever novelists would have us to believe. Our German friend held that Shakespeare knew better; and perhaps it would not be a bad thing for us to test, by a careful re-reading, the truth of his theory about Macbeth.

We have been led into this vein by a recent novel of great merit, "Steven Lawrence, Yeoman." It abounds in fine glimpses of character,—somewhat broken and contorted, however, like reflections in a concave mirror—and it has that lightness, and free, airy delicacy at which most women aim, but which few attain without sacrificing, to a great extent, that naturalness and reality which form the flesh and blood of a work of art. Mrs. Edwards has almost succeeded in writing a first-rate novel; but her defect is fatal: it lies at the very centre of her conception. Dora Fane is quite an impossible character. She seems to us a compound of two separate beings—the easy, innocent, merely indulgent, catlike, conscienceless creature, in whom true intelligence has never been awakened, and the knowing, self-conscious self-seeker, careless of all, save the attainment of the end on which the heart has been set. Very much of her conduct is inexplicable, save on this supposition. Indeed, when one bears in mind the manner in which, at the very outset, she is made to betray all her selfish, catlike proclivities, and to proclaim her incapacity for anything noble, we might almost say for anything honest, one cannot help feeling that she has been put before us for a purpose. We very soon discover that poor little Dora, on whom, of all the characters, the greatest pains have been spent, is there, after all, as a mere foil to the superior nature and charms of Katherine Fane, and the natural health, openness, and supreme honesty of Steven Lawrence. It was a great pity that

the authoress did not find out some other way of developing the characters of her hero and heroine; for, notwithstanding great labour and some real art, what is meant to be the most original and ambitious character in the book, is a kind of troublesome dissolvent. Wherever the other characters are brought into the closest associations with her, they are almost sure to lose their own identity. Katherine constantly does so; and this is even the case with Lawrence, whenever, in company with Dora, he is thrown into an interesting situation, as on Dora's return from Lady Sarah's masquerade in the dress of a page, when he says that he will not touch her; and again, when he meets her in the lane, the day after his refusal by Katherine, when a cunning word and a turn of her eye draws from him a thoughtless offer of marriage. Now, though it seems to us consistent enough with Steven's character that he should behave himself to Katherine Fane as he does, very much of his behaviour to Dora is quite unnatural and inconsistent, more especially after he had had experience either of her stupidity or her deceit—for either of which such a man as he is pictured would have equally disliked her—in the matter of the portrait. And all the faults we have hinted at come out in the dialogue whenever Dora is introduced. It is unrelieved confession. "The better art o' hidin'" is most arbitrarily conferred on poor Dora whenever it suits the needful turn in the story; while she is often represented in the very next page as being as simple and guileless as a child. Where Mrs. Edwards has really succeeded is in some of the minor characters. Not seldom there is a freshness, a clearness and felicity of touch, such as we have rarely seen surpassed. Barbara, the old housekeeper at Ashcot, with her brusque ways and her invariable breakdown and touching comfort when things come to the worst, is a fine study; and so is poor, thin Lord Petres, though quite in a different way. Mrs. Hilliard, too, is good; and the squire is much the same man from first to last; only, now and again there is a softness of outline and colour which contrasts very much with the subject. But the worst of the matter, in viewing it broadly, is, that when Mrs. Edwards least intends it, sympathy is excited for Dora in those very movements of her nature which are most opposed to all sense of propriety, and even of morality itself. On the whole, however, this is a piece of excellent work; its great drawback is, that the padding is often run up too close to the central situations and characters. Perhaps this is the reason why, for ourselves, we cannot say that Mrs. Edwards' upwards of 900 pages have affected us as she reports a certain 900 pages to have affected one of her characters.

"Doctor Brady" is a story of a totally different order from "Steven Lawrence;" indeed, turning from the one to the other is very much like passing from home-quiet into the rattling variety of a strange city. The one is a series of studied pictures which, with all their defects, are full of expression and truthfulness; the other is a panorama, in which pictures dashed together pass before you with only a sort of arbitrary